

TOWARDS A NEW HISTORY: IREDELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

A Thesis
by
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ABSTRACT

TOWARDS A NEW HISTORY: IREDELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA (May 2010)

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The local historians of Iredell County, like Homer Keever, have created a master narrative based on old, traditional, and disproven schools of thought—such as the now discredited works of the historian Archibald Dunning, whose nineteenth century books provided the basis for a whole generation of southern apologist scholarship. The mythical story they have built exemplifies the use of power and prestige to promote an agenda using history as a vehicle.¹ While modern historians know better than to rely on these antiquated schools of thought, such traditional ideals remain prevalent among some local amateur historians. This thesis examines Keever's analyses, as well as his sphere of influence, and seeks to correct decades of misinterpretation.

Through the use of oral history, examination of Homer Keever's background, and consultation of modern historians, the author was able to place Keever within a historical context and expose the impact of his influence. In doing so, it was possible to offer suggestions for rectifying years of sanitization. With a new understanding of Iredell County's history, local researchers can now provide updated resources for school children and county

¹ For a discussion on the Dunning School, see Chapter 3.

residents. The county's museum can reexamine their collections management policy in order to incorporate the underappreciated and ignored subjects of historical significance to Iredell County and provide new exhibits and presentations that everyone in the community can enjoy and learn from.

DEDICATION

I would first like to dedicate this work to my parents, Darren and Kim, who have always encouraged me to further my education and who believed in me when I often did not believe in myself. I cannot forget my siblings: to my sister, Mandi, for always reminding me how special I am, and to my brother, Kenneth, for forcing me to focus, yet stay young. Also, to my best friend, Ashley Wardell, who for the past thirteen years has kept me sane and in the right direction. I would like to dedicate this to my grandparents, Jean and Pat Clubb, as well, for they have helped me slowly discover who I am and have made sure that I never fell destitute. In addition, I would also like to recognize Daniel Michalak for putting up with me while I wrote this and for supporting and believing in me no matter what. This work would not have been completed, either, were it not for my godchildren, Elijah Drake Futch and Kaylea Marie Wardell. They have shown me what life is truly about.

Finally, I would like to dedicate my thesis to the faculty and staff members (both graduate and undergraduate) who have pushed me to always do my best: Dr. Lisa Holliday, Dr. Charles Watkins, Dr. Andrea Burns, Dr. Karl Campbell, Dr. and Mrs. Bly (who kept me well-fed), Dr. Sheila Phipps, Dr. Richard Spencer, the Drs. Reid, Dr. Eloranta, Dr. Wade, and, of course, Mrs. Donna, who always put a smile on my face.

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Mrs. Sandra Campbell Douglas, Iredell Museums secretary and author of *Iredell County, North Carolina: A Brief History*

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Mr. Joel Reese, Local History Librarian, Iredell County Library

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
List of Images & Tables.....	ix
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Iredell County.....	5
Chapter 2: Homer Maxwell Keever.....	25
Chapter 3: Keever: Amateur Promotionalist.....	37
Chapter 4: Towards a New History	69
Selected Bibliography	83
Appendix A: Maps & Tables	84
Biographical Sketch	89

LIST OF IMAGES

1. Thomas C. Dula Historical Marker	5
2. Early map of southeastern coast	7
3. Judge James Iredell	9
4. Rural landscape in Iredell County.....	11
5. Houston Farmhouse in Iredell County	12
6. Young boy picking cotton.....	13
7. Railroad in Iredell County	14
8. Iredell County Clocktower.....	21
9. Downtown Statesville Architecture	22
10. Iredell County Courthouse.....	2
11. Crawford Family Farm	24
12. Homer Maxwell Keever.....	25
13. North Carolina Millhouse	26
14. Duke Chapel at Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina.....	28
15. Ad from <i>Iredell Daily Record</i>	32
16. Indian Brave.....	41
17. Mount Mourne Plantation	45
18. Confederate Grave in Iredell County	49
19. Civil War Graveyard in Statesville	50
20. Votes for Women.....	55

21. 1923 Biology Textbook Illustration.....	57
22. United States “Black Belt”	64

INTRODUCTION

Myth is regarded as something from the distant past, used to amuse or celebrate rather than to serve social or psychological purposes. Nothing could be further from the truth.

-William C. Davis, The Lost Cause: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy

Local histories often suffer because of the allure for the professional or trained historian to study major histories which focus on global, national, and regional studies. According to some historians, there is no glory in studying local history.¹ That field is meant for secondary schools and historical societies.² However, this mentality does a disservice to local histories and diminishes the impact that local history has on the larger schemes of global and national history. Without an understanding of local history, it is impossible to grasp the widespread effects of historically significant national events.

In many cases, local history is constructed by a resident who, through his or her research, becomes the unofficial local historian. These local historians tend to be amateur historians with little to no formal training in the field of history and research. Such individuals are amateur promotional historians, a term coined by North Carolina historian, Dr. Karl Campbell.³ It refers to many of those who document local histories in order to

¹ For full details on this argument about distinctions between amateur and professional historians, read David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*, 2nd Edition (New York: Altamira Press, 2000).

² Terence O'Donnell, "Pitfalls Along the Path of Public History," *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 239.

³ Karl Campbell, memo to author, April 9, 2010.

uphold their city or county in a positive manner. These historians often promote an idealized version of the area of their study. This critique is not said to devalue or belittle the work of all local historians, many of whom do significant, and insightful work. But it is imperative to re-analyze the work of some of these local historians in order to correct errors within their master narrative and work towards a new history.

An example of how local history may be distorted can be seen in Homer Maxwell Keever's portrayal of Iredell County, North Carolina. Because Keever's book, *Iredell-Piedmont County* (1976), has served as the only official history of Iredell County, subsequent amateur historians and authors have heavily relied on his research and analyses. Yet Keever's work sanitizes the history of Iredell County as that of a small town whose citizens worked diligently to rise from the poverty, racism, and sexism so commonly associated with rural areas.

Keever, whose work first appeared in the form of weekly newspaper articles, was asked to distill his articles into a book for publication by Mrs. J.S. Evans, Jr., leader of the Iredell County Bicentennial Commission. Bicentennials are often cause for celebration and culminate in the form of parades, specially created logos, and an increased historical awareness. Often this increased awareness produce a form of extreme patriotism, while in turn ignoring certain ethnic and cultural groups.⁴ It is important to note that no published study of the county existed prior to Iredell County's bicentennial. A surge of historical awareness, post-bicentennial, can be seen in books published by Keever, the Genealogical Society, W.N. Watt and Sandra Douglas Campbell, as well as the shift of the county's

⁴ A particularly great work which analyzes the difference between national agendas and local attitudes in the twentieth century (encompassing bicentennials) is John E. Bodnar's *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 1993).

museum from the Iredell Arts and Sciences Museum to the Iredell Museum of Arts and Heritage in the 1990s.

When writing a social history, public historians often have the difficult task of merely locating enough sources to create a complete, cohesive work with satisfactory evidence to support the author's claims.⁵ In this particular instance, Keever's book, which was published for the bicentennial, sprang from a forty year research venture. He relies heavily on oral history, legislative and military records, United States census data, and local newspaper articles. Therefore, much of the factual basis of this thesis depends upon many of the same materials Keever utilized and this thesis leans heavily on the excellent research Keever has provided all those who follow in his footsteps. Where this thesis differs from Keever's work on Iredell County is in the interpretation of those sources and with his choice of topics to include in his narrative.

The local historians of Iredell County, like Keever, have created a master narrative based on old, traditional, and disproven schools of thought—such as the now discredited works of the historian Archibald Dunning, whose nineteenth century books provided the basis for a whole generation of southern apologist scholarship. The mythical story they have built exemplifies the use of power and prestige to promote an agenda using history as a vehicle.⁶ While modern historians know better than to rely on these antiquated schools of thought, such traditional ideals remain prevalent among some local amateur historians. This thesis examines Keever's analyses, as well as his sphere of influence, and seeks to correct decades of misinterpretation.

⁵ See David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty's *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2000).

⁶ For a discussion on the Dunning School, see Chapter 3.

Iredell County has relied heavily on the analysis of a man who was influenced by certain aspects of his Methodist upbringing, the racial tensions of the 1900s, and the ideas of an antiquated school of thought. Rather than challenge these notions, subsequent local historians have simply continued to promote Keever's view of Iredell County because it is affirmative and encouraging. Keever could not have understood the impact his faulty interpretation would have on future generations. It is imperative for current and future historians to confront and correct Keever's misguided understanding and place the history of Iredell County within the context of modern historical interpretation

CHAPTER ONE

Iredell County

*Hang down your head, Tom Dooley. Hang down your head and cry.
Hang down your head, Tom Dooley. Poor boy, you're bound to die.
- "Ballad of Tom Dooley"¹*

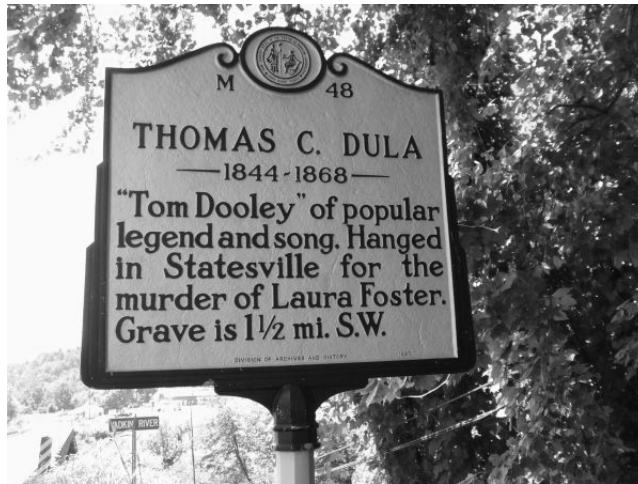


Image 1. Thomas C. Dula, M-48, North Carolina Highway Historical Marker Program, North Carolina Office of Archives & History-Department of Cultural Resources, 2007.

A mythical history of Iredell County, North Carolina, constructed by Homer Maxwell Keever, has been widely accepted by the county's residents. His master narrative, composed

¹ This ballad was written by Frank Proffitt. The Kingston Trio popularized a version of the song in the 1950s. Tom Dula was a resident of Iredell County in the nineteenth century and an impoverished Confederate Veteran. Dula was accused of murdering his fiancée, Laura Foster, in 1866. Many theories have circulated as to why. Some say that he murdered her because he believed he had contracted a venereal disease from her and passed it to his lover, Ann Melton. Others say that Dula had taken up with Laura after he discovered his lover, Ann, had married James Melton. Upon getting Laura pregnant and deciding to elope, it is believed that Ann killed Laura out of jealousy and that Dula covered for her. Dula was convicted and hanged, despite the fact that he was represented *pro bono* by North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance. This case exemplifies the religiously conservative values of the region as Dula was most likely convicted since Laura Foster was found to be pregnant at the time of her death. A full discussion of this case is found in John West Foster's books *Lift Up Your Head Tom Dooley: The True Story of the Appalachian Murder That Inspired One of America's Most Popular Ballads* and *The Ballad of Tom Dula: The Documented Story Behind the Murder of Laura Foster and the Trials and Execution of Tom Dula*.

in 1976, idealizes Iredell County as a community that rose from its impoverished rural roots to become the home of bustling businesses with a variety of cultural offerings. In order to understand Kever's myth, which has been perpetuated for decades by local public history institutions such as the county's museum and genealogical society, it is important to examine the historical facts of Iredell County itself. Without this basic information regarding Iredell County, it is impossible to place Iredell County, or Kever, within the proper context, or for readers to understand suggestions for correcting the historiography.

Iredell County is located in the Piedmont area of North Carolina in the central section of the state. The county encompasses a number of cities and towns, including Statesville (the county seat), Harmony, and Love Valley--a cowboy haven where cars are not allowed in town. Iredell is also home to Mooresville, Lake Norman, and the Memory Lane Museum, which pays tribute to NASCAR, as well as Union Grove, where an annual fiddler's convention is held, and the towns of Olin and Troutman. The county is surrounded by Yadkin County, Davie County, Rowan County, and Cabarrus County. It is also bordered by Mecklenburg County, Lincoln County, Catawba County, Alexander County, and Wilkes County.¹

Residents of southeastern Virginia began to settle North Carolina in 1650. They were considered "overflow" settlers and first moved into what is today considered the Albemarle area.² King Charles II granted an official charter in 1663 to eight English gentlemen who were called the Lords Proprietors, followed by an additional charter in 1665 to clear up boundary disputes. These Lords Proprietors, and their descendants, controlled the territory of

¹ Iredell County Government, "About Iredell County, North Carolina," <http://www.co.iredell.nc.us/about.asp>, accessed January 15, 2010. Also see the map in Appendix A.

² Reference staff of the State Library of North Carolina Information Services Branch, "Colonial Period," Historical Highlights of North Carolina, The State Library of North Carolina, <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/nc/history/history.htm>, accessed March 16, 2010. Also, see map in Appendix A.

North Carolina until 1729. In that year, North Carolina was sold by seven of the Lords Proprietors to the Crown and it became a royal colony; North Carolina was under the Crown's supervision until 1775. Yet one proprietor, Lord Granville, retained his interests and continued granting land in the northern part of the state even after the other Proprietors had relinquished their claims.³



Image 2. *Early map of southeastern coast.*⁴

Land was administered through “Granville grants” given by John Carteret, Earl of Granville. Carteret’s ancestor, Sir George Carteret, was one of the original Carolina Proprietors and was the only Proprietor to maintain his land when the others surrendered

³ Ibid.

⁴ “Explorers, Pioneers, and Frontiersmen,” Exploration and Settlement of North Carolina, Online Highways LLC., <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h624.html>, accessed March 16, 2010.

their sovereignty to the Crown.⁵ These grants were disbursed until his death in the late 1700s, when Granville's heir decided that the difficulties in collecting the quitrents outweighed the benefits of giving out grants.⁶ This practice of land distribution continued until the American Revolution, when the lands were confiscated by the state government. After 1777, the state began to issue State Grants until all the state's land was officially purchased in 1810. It was then that individual land owners parceled out their land for profit, creating much smaller tracts. Hugh Lefler and Albert Newsome, authors of several North Carolina history textbooks, also attribute this division of land to topography, soil, climate, and the forests of the Piedmont region as it "tended to retard the cultivation of large tracts of land and caused the Piedmont to develop as an area of [predominantly] small farms."⁷

Settlers from the coastal region began moving further west within the state by 1749 due to the prospect of obtaining larger land tracts. This westward migration is evidenced by a bill introduced on April 7, 1749, written specifically to form Anson County, located just southeast of Iredell County. Westward migration is also apparent because of a land survey, dated November 26, 1748, done for a Mr. John Davidson in the Iredell County area.⁸ Settlers were also drawn to the location of Iredell County because of the gently rolling ridges, numerous creeks, and the Yadkin River, which flows through the county.

Originally part of Rowan County, Iredell was formed by a bill introduced by John Steele of Salisbury during the convention of 1788 at Hillsborough, North Carolina.⁹ The bill

⁵ However, Carteret was forced to relinquish his voice in the government. William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 86.

⁶ Quitrent—a fixed rent payable to a feudal superior in commutation of services; a fixed rent due from a socage tenant.

⁷ Although a few larger plantations did exist. Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *The History of a Southern State-North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 21.

⁸ Land Survey for Mr. John Davidson, November 26, 1748, Davidson Papers, Perkins/Bostock Library, Duke University, Durham, NC.

⁹ See Laws of North Carolina—1788 Chapter XXXVI for full details.

was written specifically to divide the lands of Rowan County and form a new county called Iredell. Judge James Iredell called this convention to determine whether North Carolina would join the newly created United States.¹⁰ The bill came as part of a coalition between western residents and the Cape Fear region against the northeastern part of North Carolina to create more counties in the west; it would supply new courthouses to reduce travel time since each county had only one. It would also provide more representation for residents of the western part of the state in the state government.¹¹ Until a new county was formed, the borders of western counties like Rowan extended all the way to the Mississippi River. Yet despite being comprised of massive land areas and large populations, these counties had the same amount of representation in the government as their smaller eastern counterparts because each county, regardless of size or population, was given one senator and two members in the General Assembly.

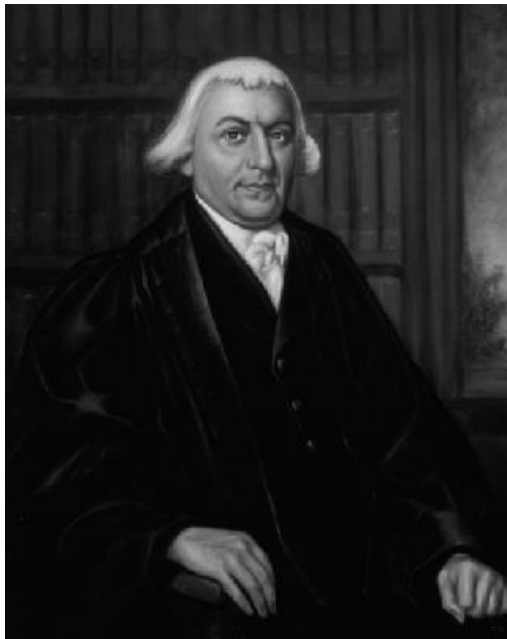


Image 3. Judge James Iredell. Photo courtesy of Iredell County NCGenWeb

¹⁰ See image 3.

¹¹ See map in Appendix A.

The bill to create Iredell County was passed by the General Assembly on November 18, 1788, with relative ease. The newly formed county was named in honor of Judge James Iredell, since he was the major driving force behind the conventions that resulted in North Carolina becoming the twelfth state of the United States of America on November 21, 1789.¹² The commissioners of Iredell County then had the responsibility of determining the county seat in a separate bill.¹³ They chose a central section of the county, written on the bill as Statesville, or “village of the state.”¹⁴

The boundaries of Iredell County remained largely intact for nearly sixty years before part of it was combined with tracts from Burke and Wilkes counties to form Alexander County in 1847. The creation of Alexander County was the only major cession of Iredell land to another county and was yet another move to afford easier access to courthouses for western residents and to provide them with more equitable representation.

The county’s history can be divided into four chronological sections based on the particular economic emphasis of each time: subsistence agriculture, railroads and trade, manufacturing, and livestock. The subsistence agriculture era refers to Iredell County at its initial formation in 1788 until the mid-1850s when the railroad came to the county. The emergence of the railroad brought Iredell County into a trading-based economic system where people from numerous surrounding counties brought their produce and merchandise to

¹² Homer Kever, *Iredell-Piedmont County* (Statesville: Brady Printing Company, 1976), 86.

¹³ See “Laws of North Carolina—1789” Chapter XXX for full details.

¹⁴ Kever, 93. The origin of this name has been debated for decades, but local historian Homer Kever, suggests that the only logical conclusion is that it was named to honor the state. Another theory introduced by historian E.F. Rockwell argues that it was named for an important road running through the center of the county. However, no conclusive evidence exists to support any of the leading theories. Statesville is considered by Kever to be the oldest city or town by that name in the nation and the only remaining Statesville of importance given that it is the only one to maintain a post office. However, “Statesville” also exists in Tennessee. It was formerly Maryville, but changed in 1815 to Statesville after it was determined there was already a Maryville in Tennessee

trade to wholesalers. There was then a gradual shift in the late 1850s towards the manufacturing era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Trading promoted the growth of industry and it flourished with the boom of cotton mills, furniture factories, roller mills, and brick-making machines.¹⁵ As trading and manufacturing took hold, the cities of Statesville and Mooresville grew. An agricultural shift from an economy focused on row crops to one centered on livestock and grain agriculture can be seen in the late 1930s. This economic agricultural shift was made possible by the Great Depression of the 1930s and the opening of the Carnation milk processing plant in Iredell County in 1939.¹⁶



Image 4. *Rural landscape in Iredell County. Photo courtesy Lee James Pantas*

During this back country era the majority of agriculture in North Carolina, specifically Iredell County, consisted of wheat, tobacco, and some cotton/flax. Historians typically divide agriculturalists into two categories: farmers—those who owned few slaves and often worked the land themselves, and planters—those who owned a large number of slaves, usually twenty or more.¹⁷ Iredell County featured primarily those who farmed the

¹⁵ Sandra Douglas Campbell, *Iredell County, North Carolina: A Brief History* (Charleston and London: The History Press, 2008), 114.

¹⁶ Keever, 3.

¹⁷ Powell, 315; Keever, 117.

land themselves, with the help of their family and perhaps a few slaves, as they did not own enough land to incorporate such a large number of slaves.¹⁸ However, according to the tax records, tenants and day laborers were commonly used for help, especially by widows or small families.¹⁹ Given Iredell County's location at the base of the Appalachian Mountains, the ground was rocky, and not suitable for large plantings of tobacco and cotton. Tobacco was not listed on the tax lists until around 1800, mostly on land in the northern part of the county owned by Marylanders and Virginians.²⁰ Therefore, Iredell County did not have a very prolific tobacco culture, which helps to explain the lack of slaves in comparison to southern states like South Carolina and Georgia. In addition, there were not many large slave plantations due to the division of land over time and because many families made their living through subsistence farming.



Image 5. *Houston Farmhouse, a plantation home in Iredell County.*²¹

Iredell County was not purely agricultural. While two-thirds of the county was made up of farmers and planters, the rest of the county was involved in industry. However, many

¹⁸ Keever, 117.

¹⁹ Iredell County Tax Records 1790-1890, Tax Administration/Land Records Agency.

²⁰ Keever, 120.

²¹ Houston Farmhouse, State Route 1102, Mount Mourne, Iredell County, NC, Historic American Buildings Survey (Library of Congress), <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.nc0269>, accessed February 24, 2010.

of these workers listed themselves as farmers in the tax records. The 1850 census lists approximately fifteen clergymen, four lawyers, seventeen teachers, seventeen physicians, sixteen merchants, and roughly sixty nine blacksmiths. Yet these numbers are far from complete since many men saw these “professions” as mere side jobs.²²



Image 6. *Young boy picking cotton.*²³

By the early 1800s, many citizens began to seek the establishment of a cotton factory.²⁴ Yet no factories emerged in Iredell County until the mid-1800s. There may be a number of reasons for this, but it may be attributed to the economic failure of the cotton factories of Salisbury and Mocksville. The factories of these two areas were large, with seventy or more looms, but these factories proved to be too large to maintain. Seeing that the factories were excessively large, Iredell County’s factories appeared in the 1850s along the county’s streams as water-powered rather than steam-charged, and were built much smaller than their neighbors.²⁵ Along with cotton mills, saw, grain, grist, and oil mills were established in the late nineteenth century throughout the county.²⁶

²² Keever, 140.

²³ J.A. Johnson's youngest son picking cotton, Statesville, North Carolina, Wolcott, Marion Post, 1910-photographer, Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8a40891>, accessed February 24, 2010.

²⁴ *The Western Carolinian*, December 2, 1828.

²⁵ Keever, 144.

²⁶ See map in Appendix A.



Image 7. *Railroad in Iredell County. Photo courtesy of Matt Mitchell of Manufrakture Photography*

During this back-country period, Statesville grew into more than just the county seat where the court met regularly. The original taverns turned into hotels, stores multiplied, and Statesville became home to a growing number of professionals and artisans. The city was also emerging as a trading center, but on December 18, 1854 this growth was stunted due to a massive fire, which destroyed most of the western side of town and the city courthouse.²⁷ The town recovered, but it was not until the emergence of the railroad in the late 1850s that Statesville, and Iredell County, transformed from a back country to a booming trading town. In turn, agriculture in Iredell County shifted from subsistence farming towards an emphasis on cash crops, like cotton and tobacco, expanding tenant and sharecropping labor in order to

²⁷ See December 1854 issue of *Salisbury Banner* newspaper in the James Iredell Collection of the Iredell County Public Library.

ship produce and grain in bulk to surrounding counties. With new merchants entering the county, there was less of a need to manufacture items like clothing at home.

The railroad reached Statesville on October 1, 1858, as part of the Western extension of the North Carolina Railroad.²⁸ This western extension was part of a plan devised to connect the eastern side of the state, from New Bern, all the way to the Tennessee state line. In 1863, the second railroad to reach Statesville was the Atlantic, Tennessee & Ohio (A.T. & O.). However, this rail line did not last long as it was immediately destroyed in order to utilize its iron and create a road from Greensboro to Danville for shipping supplies to General Robert E. Lee's army during the Civil War.²⁹ It was not rebuilt until after the war in 1871. The A.T. & O. rail line encouraged growth and was directly responsible for the emergence of Iredell County's second major city, Mooresville, which was incorporated on March 8, 1873.

The A.T. & O. grew and ran a line from Statesville to Taylorsville, located in Alexander County, in the late 1880s. By this point, however, it had been renamed as the Statesville and Western, best known as the "June Bug."³⁰ The North Carolina Midlands Railroad was the last rail line to emerge in Iredell County in the nineteenth century. All of the existing railroads were then incorporated in the Southern Railway System around 1894 due to a rash of bankruptcies among rail line owners caused by the national depression of the 1890s.³¹

The impact of the railroad on trade was visible immediately. From the appearance of coastal items like oysters on Iredell residents' menus, to the rise in the cost of eggs, the

²⁸ S. Campbell, 55.

²⁹ Keever, 220.

³⁰ S. Campbell, 57.

³¹ Keever, 227.

railroads quickly promoted a new supply-demand relationship in the county. In 1859, Isaac Wallace moved to Statesville, followed by his brother, David, in 1861 and they began the county's first herbarium.³² They sold primarily medicinal herbs and roots. By 1888 it had become the largest herbarium in the country and one of the largest in the world.³³ Other merchants and businesses boomed during this time, including Miss Emily Bell's milliner's shop, Tomlin & Gage's cotton factory, drug stores, shoe shops, and even a few hardware stores. The railroads allowed for long-distance trade between Iredell County and the mountain region in areas like Ashe and Watauga counties. But the success of the businesses like the Wallace brothers' did not last. In 1895 they declared bankruptcy, another symptom of the national depression in the 1890s strangling the country and signaling the decline of Statesville as a trading center.³⁴

Newspapers coincided with the arrival of the railroads in Iredell County. The *Iredell Express* was founded by two Whig party members, Eugene B. Drake and his son William P. Drake, in 1857.³⁵ This publication existed until the Civil War when the office was burned during Stoneman's Raid in 1865. The Drakes established their second paper, the *Statesville American*, by 1866. Charles R. Jones, from North Iredell, introduced a competing newspaper, the *Statesville Intelligencer*. The two newspapers competed for a few years until Jones moved to Charlotte to take over the *Charlotte Observer* in 1874. The *Statesville American* survived for another decade until William P. Drake was found dead in his office of unknown causes, although a heart attack was suspected, in February 1886. On June 19, 1874, Iredell

³² Keever, 241.

³³ Iredell County, North Carolina, "Towns & Cities: Statesville," Iredell County Government, <http://www.co.iredell.nc.us/towns.asp>, accessed February 22, 2010.

³⁴ Keever, 241.

³⁵ Most of the information regarding the newspapers of Iredell County is a result of microfilm research at the Iredell County Public Library and Mitchell Community College.

County saw the birth of a newspaper that would survive nearly intact until the present day--*The Landmark*. The brainchild of local attorney John B. Hussey, *The Landmark* was the leading newspaper of the county until the twenty-first century.³⁶

By the end of the nineteenth century, the post-Civil War political realignment led to the Democrats taking control of the General Assembly of North Carolina in response to Republican Reconstruction policies.³⁷ Under this Democrat-controlled state government, the General Assembly called for a constitutional convention in 1875 to implement a number of amendments to limit the power of the so-called “Radical Republicans.” These included increasing the power of the legislative branch by giving it authority over local affairs. This shift in power was achieved by replacing the popular vote with legislative vote. Marriages between blacks and whites were forbidden, residence requirements for voting became stricter, particularly to prevent the voting registration of blacks, and secret political societies were now illegal, all in an attempt to insure white power.³⁸

Democrats maintained strong control in Iredell County until 1894 when the Republicans joined forces with Populists in a “fusion.”³⁹ The Populist movement began in the 1870s as the Farmers’ Alliance, which started in Texas and spread to forty-three states in two decades, eventually becoming the People’s Party (or Populists).⁴⁰ Agricultural prices were falling, placing farmers in increased economic insecurity. While many states, especially in the West, formed a fusion between Democrats and Populists, North Carolina’s fusionist movement combined Republicans and Populists under the direction of agricultural leader

³⁶ Keever, 293.

³⁷ Powell, 404.

³⁸ Lefler and Newsome, 500.

³⁹ Keever, 309. “Fusion” refers to the agreement stating that Republicans would nominate some officers and Populists would nominate others and both parties would vote for all of them.

⁴⁰ Eric Foner, “Freedom’s Boundaries at Home and Abroad, 1890-1900,” in *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 2nd edition, ed. Steve Forman (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 638.

Marion Butler.⁴¹ Iredell County was still largely populated by farmers who had to struggle with aligning their traditional Democratic leanings to the economic security promoted by the Populists in the state and nation. The Populist Party died after 1898, but from the late nineteenth century throughout the twentieth century, there was heavy competition between the Democrats and Republicans, with the Democrats usually winning most elections.⁴²

Accompanying these political changes were many social and economic transformations. Community social activities became more publicized after the emergence of railroads and newspapers in Iredell County. In the back country era, social life was centered on the church with a strict, puritanical moral code.⁴³ Although church functions maintained importance in the lives of county residents, dancing and live music found a way into the mainstream. Literary clubs were formed, fraternal orders grew, the circus came to town, and sports became big news. The first black church in Iredell County was also formed after emancipation, established as Bethany Presbyterian Church in 1865.⁴⁴

The trading emphasis of the nineteenth century was supplemented during the twentieth century with an increase in manufacturing. The Industrial Revolution of the mid-nineteenth century came late to Iredell County which was still recovering from bank failures and railroad bankruptcy. “We need and must have factories” was the New South Creed found in county newspapers.⁴⁵ A number of manufacturing plants took hold in Iredell County, ranging from brick to heavy metals, cotton to furniture. These plants tended to be smaller in size prior to the Great Depression and World War II. However, after World War II, larger

⁴¹ James L. Hunt, *Marion Butler and American Populism* (Chapel Hill:University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

⁴² Keever, 310.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Keever, 327.

⁴⁵ Joseph P. Caldwell, “Strictly Business,” *The Landmark*, January 3, 1889, 2.

industries like Southern Screw Company and J.C. Penney began moving into Iredell County buying the smaller factories and merging them into large corporations. These factories began to spread along the railroads and roads, forming Iredell County's first industrial parks. The population during this industrial boom nearly doubled.⁴⁶

While factories were crucial, agriculture was still an important element in Iredell County. There were a number of improvements in the agricultural sector during this era, such as the help of federal government, the State Department of Agriculture, and the A & M College in Raleigh, all of which prompted revitalization in the county's farms.⁴⁷ Vocational education was implemented in local schools and agricultural fairs emerged. This shift in agricultural emphases led to the building of dairies and creameries, bringing Carnation milk processing plant to Statesville.⁴⁸

Iredell County also saw the implementation of widespread use of electricity in the mid-twentieth century, ending what local historian Sandra Douglas Campbell terms the "onus of small-town isolation."⁴⁹ The availability of modern amenities, like indoor plumbing, telephones, and the automobile, prompted increased growth as evidenced in the census records of Iredell County and Statesville. In 1900, Statesville's population was approximately 3,141 residents with roughly 29,000 in the entire county. But in 1940 the population had nearly tripled reaching 11,440 in Statesville and nearly 72,000 in Iredell County generally.⁵⁰ Hydroelectric plants, power and gas companies, and a municipal water

⁴⁶ Keever, 367.

⁴⁷ A & M later became North Carolina State University. Keever, 371.

⁴⁸ Keever, 376.

⁴⁹ Campbell, 105.

⁵⁰ Richard L. Forstall, Population Division U.S. Census Bureau, *Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900-1990*, (1995).

system thoroughly propelled Iredell County in the twentieth century and provided for improvements in local fire departments and mail services.⁵¹

The identity of Iredell County changed yet again with the surging growth of nearby cities, like Charlotte. Iredell County's official motto is now "crossroads of the future" due to the fact that both Interstate 40 and Interstate 77 intersect it. According to the 2007 census, the county's population was nearly 150,000 and at the current rate of growth is expected to reach over 170,000. The 2010 census will provide more accurate information regarding the county's population. According to the United States Department of Commerce, Iredell County has lost nearly 30,000 acres of farmland which local farmers, like Andrew Crawford, contribute to the county's population growth and desire for development. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, "With today's farms averaging about 100 acres, the loss rate is equivalent to ten farms per year."⁵² The county is also experiencing yet another shift in economic emphasis, from farming and industry, to commercial enterprises.

In the latter twentieth century, Statesville residents began to organize institutions to help them understand and preserve their history. In 1956, a group of local residents founded the Iredell Arts and Sciences Museum, located in the old water pump station in Statesville. The museum houses a permanent collection of Native American artifacts, pioneer materials, and even an Egyptian mummy.⁵³

⁵¹ Keever, 379-388.

⁵² Bethany Fuller, "Farmers Face Uphill Battle as Development Eats Open Spaces," *Iredell in Transition: A Look at Our Growing Community*, http://www.aroundiredell.com/growth/index.php/growth/article/farmers_face_uphill_battle_as_development_eats_open_spaces/, accessed February 24, 2010.

⁵³ "Arts and Science Museum," *Statesville Record and Landmark*, October 18, 1958, 3.



Image 8. *The Iredell County Clocktower in downtown Statesville. Photo courtesy of Jen Alber Photography*

This collection is intended to reflect the mission of the museum to “preserve, promote and provide learning experiences in culture, heritage, science and the arts.”⁵⁴ However, it romanticizes the ideas of Iredell County’s “pioneers” and their relationship with Native Americans, and tends to neglect African Americans. Many of the objects, like the mummy, are not representative of Iredell County, and are instead donations from prominent members of the county; these donations promote the notion of Iredell County as a locus of culture and refinement.

⁵⁴ “Mission Statement,” Iredell Museums, Inc., <http://iredellmuseums.org/about.htm>, accessed March 16, 2010.



© Jen Alber Photography All Rights Reserved

Image 9. *Example of downtown Statesville architecture. Photo courtesy of Jen Alber Photography*

The Statesville Public Library and the Iredell County Library merged in 1967 to provide better services and a larger collection for the residents of Iredell County. Music clubs, artists' guilds, and civic organizations also flourished during the twentieth century. The Iredell Arts and Sciences Museum was renamed the Iredell Arts and Heritage Museum in 1997. It stages a number of outdoor living history exhibits in an effort to commemorate an idealized backcountry era of Iredell County. The museum merged in 2004 with Iredell County's Children's Museum to form Iredell Museums Inc., in an attempt to "bring together art and artifacts of American heritage, evocative stories of Colonial life in Iredell County, local and unique art, and hands-on children's exhibits to create a new model for museum attractions in the region."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ "Mission Statement," Iredell Museums, Inc., <http://iredellmuseums.org/about.htm>, accessed March 16, 2010.

The museum moved from the old pump station in 2004 to a small office building in downtown Statesville.⁵⁶ One reason for this move was the location of the pump station: it was next to the Yadkin River which often caused flooding in the lower part of the museum, and it was difficult to find unless one knew precisely where they were going. The new location provides easier access for residents and visitors with plenty of parking downtown. The old pump station is still preserved and used for special exhibitions, while the land continues to be used for the annual outdoor exhibits. However, at the time of this publication, the museum's permanent collection is in storage, while one exhibit (usually an art exhibit) is rotated every few months. This practice hardly allows the museum to fulfill its mission. By keeping the museum's permanent collection in storage, these small exhibit programs weaken the mission by minimizing the amount of time the museum can remain open to the public, limiting educational activities, and often failing to highlight the county's rich heritage.

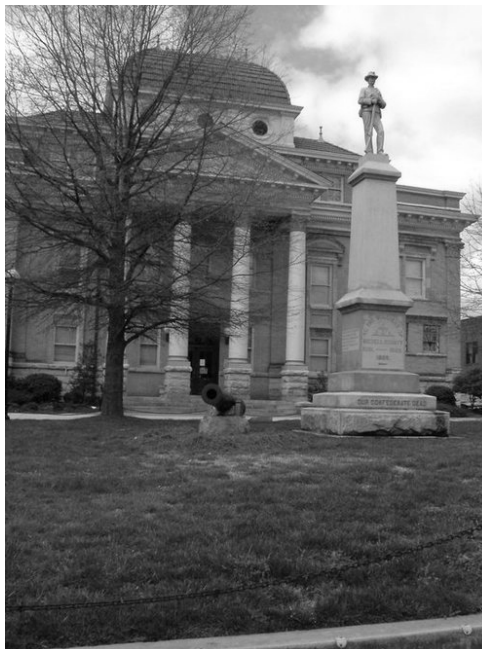


Image 10. *Iredell County Courthouse*
Photo courtesy of "Pops" for www.city-data.com

⁵⁶ "Mission Statement," Iredell Museums, Inc., <http://iredellmuseums.org/about.htm>, accessed March 16, 2010.



Image 11. *Crawford family farm located in Iredell County*
Photo courtesy of Bruce Matlock

Throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, Iredell County and Statesville specifically have had to deal with tremendous pressure from population increases as they struggle to maintain what Sandra Campbell has called the “small-town charm and rural beauty” that residents equate with their history.⁵⁷ It is easy to see the growing ignorance by residents and local leaders of Iredell County’s true history, preferring instead the mythology promoted by Keever. As the population continues to grow, with families constantly moving in and out of the county, it is imperative—before this knowledge is lost—to correct Iredell County’s history in order to educate current and future generations.

⁵⁷ Campbell, 141.

CHAPTER TWO
Homer Maxwell Keever



Image 12. *Homer Maxwell Keever. Photo courtesy of Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church Archives*

Iredell County has produced and continues to foster appreciation for artists, writers, and musicians. One such example of this proclivity is local historian, educator and Methodist minister Homer Maxwell Keever. On September 12, 1979, over three hundred people crowded into Broad Street Methodist Church in Statesville, North Carolina for Keever's

funeral. They came to pay their respects to the man who single-handedly shaped residents' understanding of the history of the county in which they lived. Homer Kever's influence in Iredell County had been felt for over fifty years. His daughter, Mary Kever Pretlow, remembers his funeral being the first time she truly recognized the authority her father had in the county.

Kever was born on February 16, 1905, in a cotton mill house in Albemarle, North Carolina to Reverend John Calvin Kever and Blanche Monroe Kever. They married in late May of 1904, less than a year before welcoming Homer into their lives. The mill house served as the parsonage for the Albemarle Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church-South, for which Reverend J.C. Kever (as he was known) was minister.

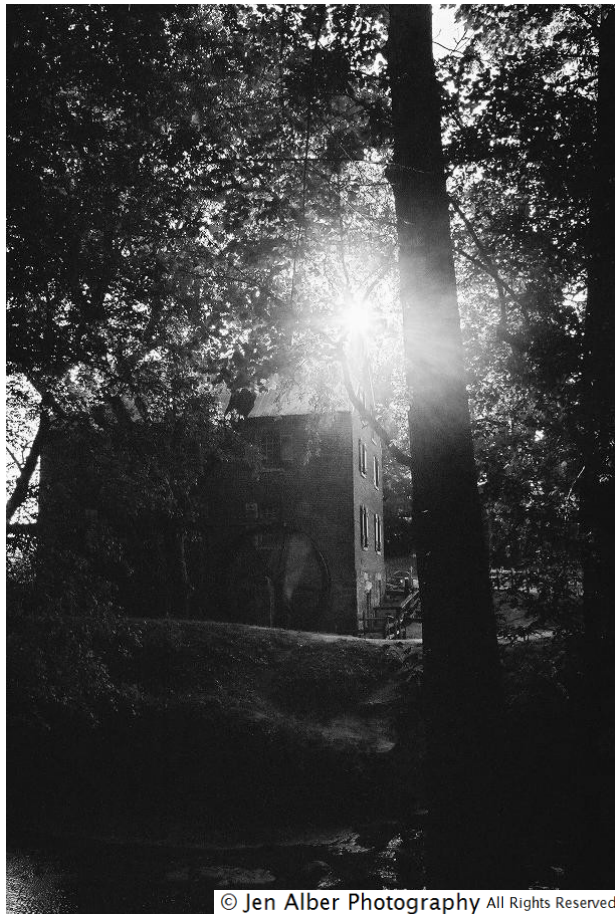


Image 13. *Example of a mill house found in North Carolina. Photo courtesy of Jen Alber Photography*

Reverend J.C. Keever hailed from Alexander County, North Carolina, and his family can be traced back to the formation of the county. He sprang from rural roots, the son of a tenant farmer in the North Iredell area. Blanche Keever came from a devout German-Scottish Highlands Lutheran family and was a school teacher from Salisbury, North Carolina.¹ She was the sister of Dr. P.E. Monroe, prominent Lutheran minister and former president of Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory. Homer was the oldest of their four children, followed by Anna Elizabeth in 1907, Nancy Catherine in 1908, and John in 1909. Reverend J.C. Keever passed away on December 20, 1961.

Keever grew up in a number of different parsonages throughout western North Carolina, two of which were in Iredell County. He spent his high school years in Troutman, attending a ten-grade institution and graduating in 1919 at the age of fourteen. He immediately entered Trinity College in Durham, North Carolina, the “most important Methodist college in North Carolina.”² Keever was one of the youngest to attend the college according to his daughter Mary. He earned his A.B. in 1923. At that time, Trinity College did not administer degrees with a major, but divided students into two categories, which were dependent upon their previous educational experience. Group A pursued a general course of study leading to an *Artium Baccalaureatus*. Group B students—“mature and well-prepared students” who had determined their future profession--were sorted further into five more specialized curricula. Although nothing on Keever’s academic record indicates which group and curriculum he followed, he apparently was a Group B student pursuing the “Religious

¹ Mrs. Mary Keever Pretlow, interview by author via phone, February 22, 2010.

² Albea Godbold, “Methodism and Higher Education, 1776-1976,” *Methodism Alive in North Carolina: A Volume Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Carolina Circuit*, ed. By O. Kelly Ingram, The Divinity School of Duke University (The North Carolina Conference, and the Western North Carolina Conference: The United Methodist Church, 1976), 119; A.B. is another abbreviation for B.A.

Training” curriculum. That curriculum included coursework in religious education and Biblical literature, both of which he took.³



Image 14. *Duke Chapel at Duke University, Raleigh, North Carolina*

Upon graduation, Keever taught for a year at Piedmont High School in Cleveland County before joining the Western North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church, spending three years in Yancey and Haywood Counties. Along with his father’s influence, the connection Trinity College had with the Methodist Church no doubt persuaded Keever to become a member of the Western North Carolina Conference.⁴ He returned to the college in 1927, renamed Duke University in 1924, to be part of the second class admitted to the newly formed School of Religion, which was founded in 1926. There, Keever earned his *Artium*

³ Information obtained from Duke University Registrar and Amy McDonald-Duke University Archives Assistant, email message to author, February 25, 2010.

⁴ “Membership of the Trustees [of Trinity/Duke] shall be, in addition to the President of the University, thirty-six elected Trustees, twelve elected by the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church; twelve by the Western North Carolina conference of the said church; and twelve by the graduates of said University...” See “Duke University’s Relation to the Methodist Church” by University Archivist William E. King, <http://library.duke.edu/uarchives/history/duke-umchh.html>.

Magister (1930), and Bachelor of Divinity. (1931) in New Testament.⁵ While at Duke, he was a member of the Columbian Literary Society as well as the Ministerial and Volunteer Bands. Keever graduated from the Divinity School in the midst of the Great Depression and struggled with unemployment for two years before securing a preaching job with a Charlotte congregation for a year.⁶

Keever left the congregation at the end of 1933 due to the fact that Methodist ministers move rather frequently between various churches and Keever chose to settle down and start a family. Considering that he had grown up the son of a Methodist preacher, Keever would have been all too familiar with the hardships of being constantly uprooted and probably desired a more stable life for his children. He resigned his clergy commission and became a local ordained elder in the Methodist Church, and moved to Stony Point, North Carolina in 1934 to teach sixth grade. His daughter, Nancy, also believes he left the clergy because he felt he would be a much better teacher than preacher because of his education.⁷

In 1934, Homer Keever married Alta Allen of Mebane, North Carolina, after a long engagement. According to their daughter Mary, Ms. Allen refused to marry Homer unless they had been engaged a minimum of five years.⁸ She was a graduate of High Point College and a teacher in Davidson County, North Carolina. They had two daughters. The oldest, Nancy, went to Duke, following in her father's footsteps, and married Lt. Milford Eugene Andersen, a naval officer. They finally settled in Mooresville, North Carolina, after Lt. Andersen retired from the service and Nancy began working at the very archives her father had worked in—the Western North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church Archives.

⁵ A.M. is another abbreviation for M.A.

⁶ Keever, 548.

⁷ Mrs. Nancy Andersen, interview by author via phone, February 25, 2010.

⁸ Mrs. Mary Keever Pretlow, interview by author via phone, February 22, 2010.

Mary, the youngest, was born February 6, 1942, and went to Appalachian State University.

Mary later married Currell Tiffany Pretlow and still resides in High Point, North Carolina.

Alta Keever moved to Union Grove in 1935 to take a teaching position there, followed by her husband in 1936. Homer Keever began to research Iredell County's history in 1937, thinking he would like to obtain a Ph.D. Instead, he saw that furthering his education was not economically viable at the time given the effects of the Great Depression. Keever held a secure job as a teacher and could not justify his desire for higher academic pursuits at the expense of his family.

From 1934 to 1968, Homer Keever taught in North Carolina public schools, spending all but four years in Iredell County. He taught eight years at Union Grove, three at Barium Springs, and three at Cool Springs, and spent the last seventeen years of his teaching career at Central School, where he also coached the Central girls' softball team. At the time, many schools in Iredell County were organized based on the K-10 or K-12 system rather than the current K-5, 6-8, 9-12 system. Keever was considered a general-purpose teacher, taking the grades and classes principals found it difficult to find teachers to fill the positions, although he ended up teaching predominantly biology and history, specifically North Carolina history, to the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

Despite maintaining his position as a teacher, Keever could not completely divorce himself from his aspirations of academic explorations and continued to research the history of Iredell County for personal satisfaction. In 1949, he began to publish his research about Iredell County in the local newspapers, *The Landmark* and *Statesville Daily Record*. On May 6, 1951, the *Daily Record* and *The Landmark* merged to become the *Statesville Record and*

Landmark.⁹ Keever took over the position of Managing Editor of the *Statesville Record and Landmark* as a side job in 1955 and published a bi-weekly column “Out of Our Past” until he became ill in 1978. In twenty-three years, publishing twice a week, Keever contributed 600 or more articles to Iredell County’s newspapers. He won second place in the Smithwick Cup competition, awarded for articles in local newspapers by the Association of Local and County Historians.¹⁰

In 1957, Keever began a fifteen minute discussion of the International Sunday School Lessons on WDBM Radio, and also taught a Men’s Bible Class at Broad Street Methodist Church. He served as a member on the Board of Directors for the North Carolina Education Association and in 1963 was readmitted to the Western North Carolina Conference as the head archivist, another side job, until he retired from teaching in 1968, when it became a full-time position. Keever then spent the rest of his days continuing to research Iredell County and publishing for the newspaper. In 1974, the Iredell County Bicentennial Commission recognized his work and approached him to consolidate his findings into a book to commemorate the county’s bicentennial. The book, *Iredell-Piedmont County*, was published by Brady Printing Company in 1976.¹¹ The title emphasizes Keever’s perceptions of Iredell County as a “typically Piedmont” county. He had been branded by the newspapers as “the most well-informed man in Iredell County on matters of county history.”¹²

⁹ Keever, 448.

¹⁰ Ibid, 458.

¹¹ No history of Brady Printing Company exists, but evidence suggests that it was a locally run printing outfit.

¹² Ad published weekly in the *Statesville Daily Record* newspaper in the 1950s.

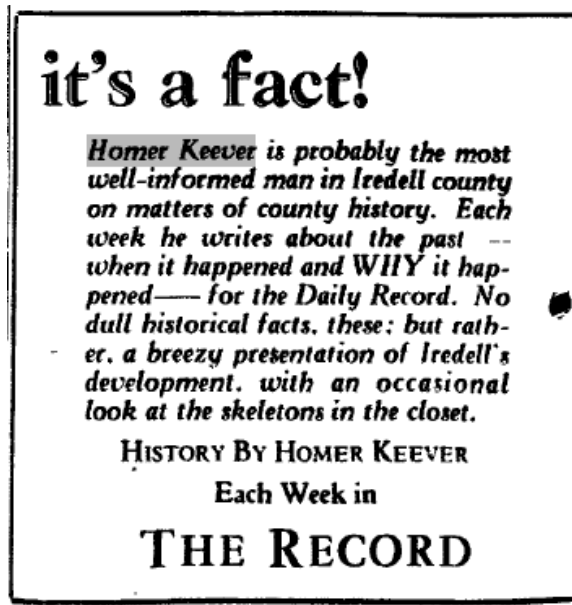


Image 15. Ad from the Daily Record of Iredell County

Due to his extensive knowledge of county history and his reputation, both in the county and in the Methodist Church, Keever was often invited to speak at local meetings like the Sara Foster Bible Class of Broad Street Methodist Church in October 1950 or the August 1954 meeting of the Optimist Club. His wife and daughters were heavily involved in the Women's Society of Christian Service of Union Grove Church and the family was often prominently featured in the newspaper, hosting various events or highlighted in the "Personals" section.¹³ Keever's daughter, Mary, recounts that her father would stand on the street corners of downtown Statesville on Friday afternoons to meet new people and shake their hands. Through his research and desire to encounter fresh faces, it is clear that Keever enjoyed his role as Iredell County's unofficial local historian.

She considers her father to have been an educated yet ordinary man, despite his influence in the county. Her family attended Broad Street Methodist Church without fail,

¹³ The "Personals" section of the newspapers would highlight important men and women, or families, who were traveling, whether for business or pleasure, or to announce special events like engagements, weddings, and births.

every Sunday. At the time, the church consisted of over 2,000 members. According to Mary, she did not get along with many of her fellow church acquaintances because they were the “Country Club” type, the more affluent members of Iredell County.¹⁴ She wanted to attend another local Methodist Church where her friends were, but her father refused, asserting that even though they were good, born-again Christians, they were uneducated. Mary attributes her father’s emphasis on education to his seminary degrees. Keever never displayed strong opinions about things like politics or war, according to Keever’s older daughter, Nancy. He was most strongly dedicated to education and served for a number of years on the local chapter of the National Education Association (NEA) board.¹⁵

Yet when one analyzes his writings, it is evident that Keever did have opinions about a number of subjects. Part of this influence undoubtedly comes from his involvement with the Methodist Church. The years of 1919 to 1984, encompassing the time frame in which Keever was a church member, are considered to have been “The Tide of Pluralism” in the Church.¹⁶ The years were marked by a claim of desiring diversity, particularly the aspiration of racial and ethnic groups, despite the feelings of some of their white counterparts, for equality within the church. In 1919, Methodists were busy with a Centenary Campaign to celebrate the mission board’s centennial promoting the idea that “the conquest of the 150 millions whose evangelization is the accepted task of Methodism.”¹⁷ According to the Church, despite the fact that the “jazzy secularism of the flappers and their hip-flasked free

¹⁴ Mrs. Mary Keever Pretlow, interview by author via phone, February 22, 2010.

¹⁵ Mrs. Nancy Andersen, interview by author via phone, February 25, 2010. In the 1920s, the NEA became a Representative Assembly which was comprised of delegates from affiliated schools and states. For a full discussion on the history of the NEA, see their website: <http://www.nea.org/home/1704.htm>.

¹⁶ John G. McEllhenney, “The Tide of Pluralism: 1919-1984,” *200 Years of United Methodism: An Illustrated History-Electronic Edition*, United Methodist Church (Madison, New Jersey: Drew University, 1984), <http://depts.drew.edu/lib/books/200Years/part4/062.htm>, accessed March 15, 2010.

¹⁷ McEllhenney, “Uncle Sam a Teetotaler,” *200 Years of United Methodism: An Illustrated History-Electronic Edition*, United Methodist Church (Madison, New Jersey: Drew University, 1984), 1, <http://depts.drew.edu/lib/books/200Years/part4/065.htm>, accessed March 15, 2010.

lovers” were promoting a depression in religion, the church remained committed to their ministries, in particular prohibition.¹⁸ A pacifistic tendency was adopted after the patriotic spirit of World War I. According to Keever’s daughter Mary, her father was “too young for the first war and too old for the second.”¹⁹ While age may have been a contributing factor for Keever not serving in either war, it is more likely his pacifistic upbringing had a great influence on his decision not to join the military.²⁰

The Methodist Church was confronted by racism within their denomination during the 1930s. The Church desired to bring the three segments of Methodists together for stronger political unity, but the different sections were divided over the subject of race.²¹ The Church’s solution was to divide the United States into jurisdictions, making all but one white and geographical. The last jurisdiction would overlap the others and be exclusively black. Some Methodist leaders saw this Central Jurisdiction as a way for African Americans to have control over their affairs, while others saw this as racist. A white pastor from Illinois asserted, “To be sure, by segregating Negroes in a Negro Conference we give them political opportunities which they would not possess within our white conferences; but we take away from them the experience of Christian Brotherhood which is far more important than is political opportunity.”²²

In 1968, historian L. Scott Allen also reiterated such sentiments, arguing that “while no one cherishes the handicap which racial discrimination has imposed upon a large segment of the Negro laity of The Methodist Church, it has served as one of the protective factors in

¹⁸ McEllhenney, “Uncle Sam a Teetotaler,” 2.

¹⁹ Mrs. Mary Keever Pretlow, interview by author via phone, February 19, 2010.

²⁰ Draft laws suggest he could have been eligible, although perhaps not in the prime age range for soldiers.

²¹ McEllhenney, “The Thirties: Uncle Sam in the Breadlines,” 1, <http://depts.drew.edu/lib/books/200Years/part4/068.htm>, accessed March 15, 2010.

²² Ibid, 2.

the maintenance of a free ministry, in the Central Jurisdiction.”²³ Allen’s rhetoric was a way of denying or limiting African Americans political opportunity, especially within the church, by arguing that they would be segregated from Christian Brotherhood. Yet the Central Jurisdiction was approved in 1939 in order to unite the northern and southern Methodists and the Methodist Protestants under the blanket of the Methodist Church. Racism of men such as Charles W. Miller and Atticus G. Haywood, prominent members of the Methodist Church, was shared by many congregations. Miller stated that, “Always and everywhere, the hour the Negro is thrown back upon his own resources they fail him, and he begins a retrograde movement which seems to be as inexorable as fate.”²⁴ Miller, along with Haywood, who argued that “daily and hourly the worst people are teaching him [the African American] the whole curriculum of the grog shop, the gambling hall, the corrupt ballot, and all the other ‘mysteries of iniquity,’” promoted this racist ideology to the Methodist Church, following the popular theories that “negroes” were genetically deficient.²⁵ There is, however, a scarcity of materials on the Central Jurisdiction because, according to Allen, “Negro historians have been reluctant to do the necessary research for compiling authoritative books on the history of their race.” This once more reveals the racist sentiments of some elements within the Methodist Church, in the North and South.²⁶

The world was again affected by carnage with the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Keever’s brother served during WWII and was a prisoner of war in a German camp in

²³ L. Scott Allen, “Toward Preserving the History of the Central Jurisdiction,” *Methodist History* October 1968, Commission on Archives and History: The United Methodist Church, 1968, 27.

²⁴ Ralph E. Luker, “In Slavery’s Shadow: North Carolina Methodism and Race Relations, 1885-1920,” *Methodism Alive in North Carolina: A Volume Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Carolina Circuit*, ed. By O. Kelly Ingram, The Divinity School of Duke University, The North Carolina Conference, and the Western North Carolina Conference: The United Methodist Church, 1976, 77.

²⁵ Luker, 77.

²⁶ Allen, 24.

1945.²⁷ The United Brethren of the Methodist Church had declared, “We as a church will not urge our men to arms nor will we urge them to take the position of the conscientious objector.”²⁸ Nancy recalls that at the end of WWII, her father drove around Union Grove, where they were living at the time, and picked up many of the local boys. They drove all around town, honking the horn and yelling in jubilation that the war had finally ended.²⁹

Examining Keever’s life highlights the people, events, and institutions that influenced his perceptions and ideologies. Chapter Three illustrates how Keever’s education; close association with the Methodist Church and its beliefs; and southern, rural upbringing affected how he interpreted history, specifically that of Iredell County, and understood particular historical events like American Indian relations, slavery, and the Civil War. The following chapter places Keever’s writing into the historical context of his contemporaries and reveals the inaccuracies of his analysis as he writes in the traditional Dunning school form.

²⁷ “Private John Keever Arrives Home from a German Prison,” *The Landmark*, May 21, 1945.

²⁸ McEllhenney, “The Forties: Uncle Same Needs You Again,” 1.

²⁹ Mrs. Nancy Andersen, interview by author via phone, February 25, 2010.

CHAPTER THREE

Keever: Amateur Promotionalist

What Homer is saying—as many a newsman has learned to his sorrow is that the way to discover the real facts is to print the wrong ones. And that’s how history gets written.

*-“Down in Iredell: History” Statesville Record & Landmark,
November 9, 1955*

North Carolina historian Dr. Karl Campbell has coined the term “amateur promotionalist” to describe some historians who document local and state histories.¹ These historians are amateur despite the depth of their research, but promotionalist due to their desire to advance an idealized version of the region they are discussing. Homer Kever, long considered Iredell County’s preeminent historian, is one such amateur promotionalist. He took on the tough job of compiling the county’s history into a condensed, readable version in order to get locals interested. Kever brands Iredell County as a county that is “like many of its neighboring counties—typically Piedmont.”² He never provides the reader with an explicit definition of what being “typically Piedmont” entails. However, details are woven through Kever’s newspaper articles and book to reveal how Kever promotes an idealized version of Iredell County—one which rose above racism and poverty often associated with rural areas.

Kever’s idealization is particularly apparent in his reliance on outmoded ideologies on issues like American Indian relations, slavery, and the Civil War. He also completely disregards important and controversial twentieth century issues like women’s suffrage, the

¹ Dr. Karl Campbell, memo to author, April 9, 2010.

² Kever, 3.

evolution debate in schools, and the Great Depression within the context of Iredell County. Despite the time period that Keever was writing his newspaper articles and book, between the 1950s and 1970s, the influence of his involvement in the Methodist Church, as well as his lack of professional historical training, led him to accept ideas that fit his conception of Iredell County, but which had long been deserted by contemporary historians. Although Keever attended a higher education institution and eventually earned an M.A. degree, his degrees were in divinity. He had no technical training in historiography, which would have helped him to navigate through the changes in the interpretation of important historical events that impacted Iredell County. Instead, Keever wrote what he knew about subjects that mattered to him. In doing so, his commissions of error and omissions promote a mythical version of the county which he had constructed. All historians are guilty of this to an extent, but professionals have the advantage of access to evolving historiographies.

In particular, Keever fell under the spell of William Archibald Dunning, who was an influential interpreter of the history of slavery and Reconstruction in the early part of the twentieth century. Dunning was born in 1859 and grew up during the political turmoil and uncertainty of Reconstruction (1865-1877), which certainly affected his interpretation of events like slavery and the Civil War.¹ His courses at Columbia University were immensely popular, leaving an “ineffaceable impression upon the hundreds of students who attended his courses” during the early twentieth century, perpetuating his theory that Reconstruction had ruined the South.² Historian Peter Novick attributes Dunning’s influence and popularity to two prominent forces during the time period: a “deep vicarious identification with one of the

¹ Charles E. Merriam, “William Archibald Dunning,” *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 16, No. 4, (November, 1922), 692.

² *Ibid*, 693.

two sides [of the Civil War]” and the rise of Social Darwinism.³ Social Darwinism is a theory which merges the biological concept of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution and natural selection and Herbert Spencer’s “survival of the fittest” to support segregation between races and classes. Dunning’s followers left school to obtain jobs as historians and teachers, carriers of the Dunning theory which permeated history textbooks up through 1950s and 60s.

A number of historians emerged after Dunning, like Kenneth M. Stampp, Hugh Lefler, and Albert Newsome, who attempted to reexamine the theories of the Dunning School. Although these historians looked at the same documents as Dunning and his followers, they drew a different interpretation from them.⁴ This is not to say that these historians did not have their own theoretical issues. But they continued to familiarize themselves with new ideologies and current literature in order to reveal the dynamic nature of history. Keever, educated enough to identify and use historical documents, tended to take historical events at face value, as static, and seems not to have been aware of modern interpretations of those materials.

One finds evidence of this misinterpretation in Keever’s frontier period discussion of Indian relations with white residents in the area. Iredell County has served as home to a number of Indian tribes throughout history. The early settlers of the area encountered the Catawbas living near the Catawba River who used the lands, which would later become Iredell County, for hunting.⁵ Historians describe the Catawba as peaceable and friendly

³ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 74.

⁴ See Bernard Weisberg’s article “The Dark and Bloody Ground of Reconstruction Historiography,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Nov., 1959), 427-447.

⁵ S. Campbell, 16. Also see map in Appendix A.

despite suffering great losses due to smallpox and other European diseases.⁶ Keever describes the Catawba similarly, but argues that there were numerous misunderstandings as a result of native behavior. Much of his information is gleaned from eighteenth century reports left behind from county residents such as Bishop Spangenburg, William Morrison, and William McKnight. Their disdain for the natives is apparent. Keever quotes Bishop Spangenburg from a trip the Bishop took to the frontier in 1752:

Here the Indians conduct themselves in such a way that the whites are afraid of them. If they enter a house and the man is not at home they become insolent and the poor woman must do as they command.⁷

Keever analyses these misunderstandings as being the fault of the natives for not explaining their customs to the frontier residents. All too easily, argues Keever, the natives took to such habits as drinking alcohol and gambling.⁸

The various tribes also had long-standing feuds and wars that were in effect well before the settlers entered the picture. These disputes, according to Keever, caused great tension in white settlements due to their proximity to these battles.⁹ So great was this threat, after learning of the Broad River Massacre in the Ohio Valley during the mid-1700s, that Governor Arthur Dobbs persuaded the Iredell County Assembly to construct a fort “to which the settlers might retire in case of trouble.”¹⁰

But it was the Cherokees, according to Keever, which afforded the settlers the most grievous trouble. At one point the Cherokees appropriated, “Indian fashion,” some horses on their way to join the “menace of the French Indians.”¹¹ This meant, of course, that they had stolen the horses. But this terminology, which Keever also uses when describing the

⁶ Powell, 24.

⁷ Keever, 50.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, 52.

¹⁰ Ibid, 53.

¹¹ Keever, 55.

Catawbas, reveals an attitude towards Native Americans which had been adopted by many whites for decades. Keever also inserts detailed accounts written by Lt. Hugh Waddell and E.F. Rockwell.



12

Image 16. *Indian Brave*

The account by Lieutenant Waddell is undoubtedly an exaggeration to make himself appear more heroic, as it was in a letter sent to Governor Dobbs. The other, by E.F. Rockwell, was a compilation of stories picked up over time and used as an article in the *Carolina Watchmen*, a small, local newspaper published in the eighteenth century. These embellishments served to vilify the natives and highlight the heroic nature of the white settlers. These flourishes allowed the settlers to lay blame elsewhere, rather than in their own failure to communicate with the natives. In this way, the whites' appropriation of native lands appeared less imperialistic. Keever goes on to recount numerous unnamed raids by the Indians, predominantly Cherokee, which killed countless men, women, and children. One

¹² Gray & Thompson Advertising, Indian Brave. Eastern Cherokees, Near Asheville, NC, North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, ca. 1915-1930, http://dc.lib.unc.edu/u/?/nc_post,1847, accessed March 2, 2010.

such woman, according to Keever, was Elizabeth Steele, mother of John Steele, who was involved in the creation of Iredell County. He states: “Just how many more, whose wives did not become so well known, were killed in those Indian raids we will never know.”¹³

Keever assumes that the natives were constantly raiding the white settlements. Yet he relies heavily on sources written by white settlers who had a direct interest in vilifying the natives in order to further their cause of land absorption. However, much of Keever’s analysis conflicts with the picture portrayed by historians like William S. Powell, author of a leading North Carolina history textbook, who argues that the natives were the victims of white supremacy.¹⁴ Keever’s study also neglects the effects the white settlers’ encroachment had on tribal relations and native welfare. Keever depicts the natives as hostile towards English whites and allying with the settlers’ enemy, the French. Yet he never denounces the whites for their greed and intrusion into native territory. As with any area that housed natives, it was the settlers’ general intention to displace these tribes from the land. Native Americans had no concept in their culture of land ownership.¹⁵ To them, land was available for use by whomever lived on it at the time, with no notion of passing the land on to descendants. Many whites were conniving and tricked natives into giving up their land by making offerings of trinkets or liquor.¹⁶ Or they would gather a group of natives, providing them with food, clothing, and various expensive furnishings in order to encourage them to sign treaties which would deed the land to the whites.

Many tribes were undoubtedly overcome with anger and grief after welcoming these settlers onto their lands only to be displaced and decimated. According to Powell, “Greed and

¹³ Keever, 60.

¹⁴ Powell, 26.

¹⁵ Ibid. Many historians, like William Cronon in *Changes in the Land*, have documented this concept.

¹⁶ Ibid, 27.

envy, a feeling of racial superiority, and an indifference to human suffering were rampant among the whites.”¹⁷ Revenge and conflict appear to be natural reactions to such treatment. Lefler and Newsome, authors of another important North Carolina textbook, assert that the “aggressive, if not contemptuous,” attitude of white settlers led to “resentment” by the natives.¹⁸ While modern historians had moved beyond the “suffering whites” ideology, Keever simply could not divorce himself from the outdated theories he was accustomed to.

Keever also distorted the role of slavery in Iredell County. Slaves were present in Iredell County very soon after the first settlements appeared in the mid-1700s. According to the first federal census in 1790, slavery in the area continued to grow through 1860.¹⁹ Keever admits that local opposition to slavery was “not outspoken” and that there was not widespread emancipation in Iredell County, but he counters that by maintaining the argument that two-thirds of the families in the county owned no slaves.²⁰ As for those who did, Keever maintains that their treatment of slaves was ambivalent; while it was harsh in some instances, there was a sense of paternalistic care on the part of the masters and therefore slavery was “never as bad as the abolitionists pictured it nor as good as those who preached slavery as the ultimate in society imagined it.”²¹ However, Keever diminishes slavery and the role it played the still-developing county by neglecting the dehumanizing affects slavery had on the African American population in Iredell County.

Because Iredell County and its neighbors did not have the proper soil to maintain extensive numbers of large plantations, Keever argues that the county therefore lacked many of the evils associated with the institution of slavery. The example he uses to highlight these

¹⁷ Powell, 27.

¹⁸ Lefler and Newsome, 30.

¹⁹ Gary E. Blessing, *1790 U.S. Census* (2002).

²⁰ Keever, 139.

²¹ *Ibid*, 131.

evils is that of the slave master who has so many slaves he loses personal contact with them.²² This notion of “personal contact” allows Keever to dismiss the harsh reality of slavery because it perpetuates the idea of a paternal, loving master.²³ These paternal masters, although they sold their slaves further south, were as humane in the sale as possible, according to Keever. “Sons and daughters were taken from their families about the age when they would be leaving home anyway. The same process was going on among the white population.”²⁴ This misconception is borne out of the idea that African tribes operated under the same social guidelines and standards as colonial Americans.²⁵

Direct ownership of slave property was not the only way in which Southerners became “personally involved” in the system.²⁶ If this were the case, then the majority of residents in these southern states would have had absolutely no interest in preserving slavery. Rather, as historian Kenneth M. Stampp argues in *The Peculiar Institution*, these non-slaveholding families protected and defended the institution because it afforded them a place in a “superior caste” and presented them with the opportunity to rise to the same status as a planter.²⁷ Poor whites were, at minimum, part of the enforcement system via paternalism.

Keever’s depiction of the slave family looks very much like the Methodist church’s version of family life. Keever argues that care was taken not to “separate slave husbands and wives as they were sold.”²⁸ However, he then says that marriage was illegal among slaves as

²² Keever, 132.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ This ideology can be classified under the concept of parochialism which asserts the notion that one particular view, opinion, interest, or cultural value is the only valid one. For an example on the discussion of the effects of cultural differences, see Richard C. Keller’s *Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

²⁶ Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 29.

²⁷ Powell, 33.

²⁸ Keever, 133.

it would interfere with the master's ability to sell them.²⁹ But, according to Keever, masters permitted and encouraged their slaves to pair up, go through a ceremony and live together as man and wife in a cabin which was furnished by their master.³⁰ And if the husband and wife were from different plantations, then the masters would make arrangements for the man to visit, states Keever, suggesting considerable freedom of movement.



Image 17. *Restored Mount Mourne Plantation in Iredell County, NC. Photo courtesy of Historic Latta Plantation Website*

According to Keever, most slave procreation was carried on in these endorsed slave families, with few exceptions. One of the exceptions he is referencing is that of the master impregnating his slaves, resulting in mulatto children. These “exceptions,” claims Keever, have been blown out of proportion by critics of slavery since most plantations and farms in Iredell County did not list mulattos on the slave schedules. He overlooks the fact that many mulattos have simply gone unrecorded.³¹

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See Werner Sollors' article ““Never Was Born:” The Mulatto, an American Tragedy,” *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), 293-316.

Overall, according to Keever, slaves, particularly in Iredell County, were content with their position:

Slaves were likely better clothed, better fed, better housed, better cared for than many of the poor whites. They were far more secure than many of their neighbors. That there was a general satisfaction with the way they were treated must be guessed by the fact that when the men were gone off to the Civil War, there was no hint of an uprising. The slaves stayed and took care of the farms and the women. And after the war, so many stayed on those farms and entered into a tenant relationship with their old masters.³²

This kind treatment of slaves, he claims, is evidenced by accounts and traditions that have been passed down through the generations. For example, on the Mount Mourne plantation in Iredell County, stories by the family members of paternalism and care far outweigh any accounts of whippings and runaway slaves, with many slaves even receiving Christmas presents.³³ Whippings, states Keever, were considered effective and normal punishment for both white and blacks, but they were reserved more for white criminals than slaves because “a sullen, whipped slave did not work as well as a contented one.”³⁴ He provides the reader with no specific documentation, however, of these accounts. Nor does Keever indicate what records he examined that asserted that there was no hint of slave uprisings.

It is easy to see how untrained, local historian Homer Keever, a contemporary of professional historian Kenneth M. Stampp, was unequivocally stuck in an outdated historiographical frame of mind while his counterparts evolved with changing ideologies. Even Lefler and Newsome accepted the Revisionists arguments about slave victimization. Keever did not, either because he did not know or them or did not accept them. *The New York Times* columnist, Bruce Weber, calls Stampp the “leading Civil War historian who

³² Keever, 136.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid, 135.

redirected the scholarly view of slavery in the antebellum South from that of a benign relationship between white plantation owners and compliant slaves to one of harsh servitude perpetuated to support the South's agrarian economy."³⁵ Keever and Stamppp were both born in the early 1900s—Keever in 1905 and Stamppp in 1912—attending school during the same years and researching their respective topics at similar times. Yet Stamppp earned his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D in history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, providing him the training necessary to interpret and understand historical sources. It also afforded Stamppp the opportunity to study under the influence of prominent historians Charles A. Beard and William B. Hesseltine.³⁶ Keever did not have such opportunities.

Keever makes some of the same assertions as Stamppp about yeomen farmers and masters who worked alongside their slaves, but Keever wholly misunderstood the relationship. The normal interaction between slaves and their masters, according to Stamppp, was that of labor and management, not fellow workers.³⁷ Stamppp also discusses the clear distinction between household servants and field hands, but nowhere does he make the allegation that this was a division of intelligence as Keever does: "Most slaves were field hands, but some had other duties...Traditionally, the more intelligent slaves were house servants, and they often looked down on the field hands."³⁸ Rather, Stamppp saw this as a matter of the amount of trust a master had for his slaves. The more trusted a slave, the higher in the hierarchy he or she climbed, whether indoors or out.

³⁵ Bruce Weber, "Kenneth M. Stamppp, Civil War Historian, Dies at 96," *The New York Times Online*, Arts-Obituary, July 15, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/15/arts/15stamppp.html>, accessed March 24, 2010.

³⁶ Beard was well-known for his reevaluation of motivations of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America, pinpointing economics, not philosophies, as the cause. Hesseltine, of comparing intellectual history to the task of "nailing jelly to the wall" fame, was Stamppp's primary advisor and famous for his revisionist ideologies on the Civil War.

³⁷ Stamppp, 36.

³⁸ Keever, 131.

Keever's assertion that slaves in Iredell County were almost never whipped is wishful thinking at best. While these punishments may not have been documented by the courts, it is almost certain that these slaves would have been punished on the master's property. In an eighteenth century letter in from Iredell County written by Judge Charles Pettigrew to Ebenezer Pettigrew, Judge Pettigrew restates a famous admonition from *North Carolina v. Mann* (1830): "The power of the master must be absolute, to render the submission of the slave perfect."³⁹ Techniques of control varied among slaveholders given the diverse nature of the slaves they owned, the land they had, and their own personal temperaments. According to Stampp, slaveholders managed this in several ways: strict discipline, instilling the belief of inferiority in the slaves, asserting their power to incite fear and awe, creating an interest in the success of the farm or plantation in the slaves, and making slaves feel helpless and dependent. Some masters did choose not to punish slaves in such ways. However, it was not out of purely humanitarian interests. Instead, some masters thought of slaves as animals, "much like the gentle and loving treatment of a horse instills docility and obedience, would the same not hold true for slaves?"⁴⁰

While Keever's research and data about slavery is correct, he is an example of many local historians. He lacks the professional training and reading of secondary sources of his contemporaries that would enable him to provide a detailed and meaningful analysis of subjects such as the deprivations attributed to slavery, and fails to keep up with the changing literature on the subject. Rather, Keever relies on antiquated ideologies and sources which support a shallow understanding of slavery and its ramifications, rather than challenging accepted notions. In doing so, he portrays the historical residents of Iredell County as

³⁹ Charles Pettigrew to Ebenezer Pettigrew, May 19, 1802, Pettigrew Family Papers, Catterall (ed.), *Judicial Cases*, Volume II, 57.

⁴⁰ Stampp, 163.

paternalistic whites who cared for the treatment of blacks who were incapable of providing for themselves, only punishing them as they would a child who misbehaved. This perception allows current county residents to maintain a romantic notion that their family members were not involved in some heinous, abusive institution, especially at the height of the Civil Rights Movement.



Image 18. *Confederate grave located in the Civil War Graveyard of Iredell County*
Photo courtesy of Wendy Robinson Photography

Keever also presents a view of the Civil War that was at odds with that of most professional historians at the time. Keever saw the conflict as the “War Between the States,” which became the most common way for Southerners and apologists to reference the conflict, due to the rationale that argued that the South had fought for states’ rights.⁴¹

⁴¹ Keever, 228.

According to historian William C. Davis, “Out of any conflict, the losers create more myths than the winners...coping with defeat, dealing with it personally and explaining it to others, places enormous strains on the ego, self-respect, and sense of self worth.”⁴² Growing up as a devoutly Christian, southern gentleman, it is quite easy to see why Kever paints the history of slavery and the Civil War in Iredell County the way that he does. Southern pride runs strong in Iredell County and the Civil War is often called the “War of Northern Aggression” in opposition to the Northern idea of it as a “War of Rebellion.”



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Image 19. *Civil War Graveyard, Statesville, North Carolina. Photo courtesy of Jen Alber Photography*

North Carolinians, as a whole, were preoccupied in the antebellum period with the internal matter of *ad valorem* taxation.⁴³ This taxation is based on the value of real estate or personal property and was a departure from the quitrent method imposed on land, slaves, and other property. Those in the state who did not own slaves, primarily in the Piedmont,

⁴² William C. Davis, *The Lost Cause: The Myths and Realities of the Civil War* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 173.

⁴³ Powell, 342. *Ad valorem* is Latin for “according to value.”

including Iredell County, and the mountains, wanted the slave holders to share more equitably in the burden of taxation through the *ad valorem* tax. According to historian William S. Powell, this preoccupation revitalized the Whig party, which strongly advocated this form of taxation. Such a partition along party lines divided the state in the face of the secession crisis.⁴⁴

North Carolina officially seceded on May 20, 1861, but Iredell County responded to the call for help from the coast to defend Fort Caswell in April 1861. The county sent the Iredell Blues regiment to defend the South after Lincoln addressed North Carolina Governor John Ellis asking for troops. Governor Ellis responded:

Your dispatch is received, and if genuine, which its extraordinary character leads me to doubt, I have to say in reply, that I regard the levy of troops made by the administration for the purpose of subjugating states of the South, as a violation of the Constitution, and as a gross usurpation of power. I can be no party to this wicked violation of the laws of the country and to this war upon the liberties of free people. You can get no troops from North Carolina.⁴⁵

The Iredell Blues was originally formed in 1840 as a state militia under the command of Col. John M. Young.⁴⁶ They became Company A in the Fourth Regiment of North Carolina troops during the Civil War. In fact, all nine of Iredell County's companies in the Fourth Regiment fought for the Confederacy.⁴⁷ Iredell County contributed nearly 2,000 men to the cause, as well as sending captains to a number of other North Carolina regiments.⁴⁸ North Carolina committed over 115,000 men to the Confederate cause in 1861, quite a

⁴⁴ Powell, 342.

⁴⁵ North Carolina American Civil War Statistics Battle History, "Telegram from Governor John Ellis to President Abraham Lincoln, April 15, 1861," <http://thomaslegion.net/confederate.html>, accessed January 21, 2010.

⁴⁶ Iredell Blues, "The Original Iredell Blues," Fourth North Carolina State Troops-Company A, <http://www.iredellblues.com/>, accessed March 2, 2010.

⁴⁷ See W.N. Watt's *Iredell County Soldiers in the Civil War* (1995) or the North Carolina Roster of Civil War Regiments, compiled by Chuck Ewing, www.civilwarroster.com, accessed March 18, 2010, for full details.

⁴⁸ "Some Iredell Soldiers of the War," *The Landmark Newspaper*, May 11, 1906.

substantial sum considering that it was the last state to secede.⁴⁹ By the end of the war, nearly 125,000 North Carolina men fought for the Confederacy. According to the 1860 United States Census there were only 128, 889 men in North Carolina between the age of 20 and 60.⁵⁰ Desertion rates in the state were equivalent to those in the North and the South, roughly 20 percent.⁵¹

However, according to Keever, Iredell County was “insistent that it did not want it [war]” and that “masterly inactivity” was their strength.⁵² He asserts that surrounding counties were busy calling secession conventions while Iredell County sat still. Yet Iredell’s response was “prompt and positive” after the firing on Fort Sumter, hinting at his view that the Civil War was fought by North Carolina over state’s rights, not slavery.⁵³ Keever cites numerous times that the men serving from Iredell County were “dissatisfied and complaining, but still going on.”⁵⁴ Yet this would be true of any young man serving an army in a war that had such high casualty rates. Keever manipulates numbers to serve his purpose.

When discussing slavery, he uses census records to claim that very few families owned slaves, arguing that this proves Iredell County did not believe in slavery. Keever ignores data about topography and soil which suggests a need for small-scale farming rather than slave-labor agriculture. He also disregards other data sets, such as enlistment rate and casualties in the Civil War. Neither set of statistics reveals motive. The fact that few families owned slaves does not mean that racism and promotion of the institution was not still prevalent among Iredell County residents. Nor do enlistment rates and casualties suggest

⁴⁹ William A. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War: A Treatise on the Extent and Nature of the Mortuary Losses in the Union Regiments with Full and Exhaustive Statistics Compiled from the Official Records on File in the State Military Bureaus and at Washington* (Ebooksondisk.com, 2002), Chapter XV.

⁵⁰ Although certainly a number of North Carolinians fought for the Union.

⁵¹ Powell, 457.

⁵² Keever, 228.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 234.

support or opposition to the war or slavery. Such interpretation by Keever is yet again an example of his role as an amateur historian, who lacked a reading in the secondary sources and maintained a personal bias.

Analyses of the Civil War, like those promoted by Keever, have been castigated by modern historians as “The Lost Cause” theory. On the one hand, Keever asserts that Iredell County was hesitant to go to war; on the other hand, Keever argues that Iredell County fully supported the South against President Lincoln’s aggression, and that the war was not about slavery as evidenced by the fact that “when the men were gone off to the Civil War, there was no hint of an uprising. The slaves stayed and took care of the farms and the women. And after the war, so many stayed on those farms and entered into a tenant relationship with their old masters.”⁵⁵ While it is true that many former slaves remained either on the farm of their former master, or in very close proximity, Keever’s assertion that this relationship emerged out of a mutual respect between the two is wishful thinking. The truth is that the South was devastated by war-time debt accrued because Confederate government lacked the ability to levy or collect internal taxes and the bulk of southern capital had been comprised of land and slaves. In addition, the South had to repudiate the Confederate debt, devastating in its own right considering Confederate money was worthless.⁵⁶

The Civil War had also devastated the South’s military-age male population, and, according to historian Gary Gallagher, “vastly altered their physical landscape and economic infrastructure, and destroyed their slave-based economy.”⁵⁷ Since slaves had just obtained their freedom, they owned no property and did not have any means with which to support

⁵⁵ Keever, 136.

⁵⁶ Tax History Museum, “1861-1865: The Civil War, Confederate War Financing,” Tax History Museum, <http://www.tax.org/museum/1861-1865.htm>, accessed March 24, 2010.

⁵⁷ Gary W. Gallagher, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 1.

themselves, leaving them with very few options and practically nowhere to go. Since many former slave owners found themselves with little or ravaged land, no guaranteed labor source, and a loss of many of their sons, it left the slave owners in a similar position to their ex slaves. In turn, a relationship of tenancy emerged between the farm owners, freedmen, and poor whites.⁵⁸

This apologist way of thinking about slave-owner relationships developed throughout the post bellum era as an ideology called the Confederate tradition and part of the institutionalized history by people like Dunning.⁵⁹ According to historian Gaines Foster, “Even one who sought to escape its [the Confederate tradition] hold, who thought evil men manipulated it, could never completely ignore or repudiate what southerners considered to be the heroism of the war.”⁶⁰ Portraying the war as a defense of states’ rights and Confederate soldiers as loyal to the values of the Constitution helps southerners, and apologist historians, maintain some semblance of pride in their region and mitigate their sense of shame and defeat.

Perhaps even more disconcerting than Keever’s faulty analyses of particular subjects is the omission of important topics like women’s suffrage, the evolution debates in public schools, the Great Depression, and desegregation in public schools that could have greatly impacted Iredell County. His chapter on the twentieth century is full of information about manufacturing and the Industrial Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution and the Electric Age, roads, and entertainment, yet he manages to disregard key moments in United States

⁵⁸ North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources/Office of Archives and History, “Sharecropping and Tenant Farming,” North Carolina Digital History, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newsouth/4698>, accessed March 24, 2010.

⁵⁹ Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South 1865-1913* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 115.

history, like women's suffrage, that certainly affected Iredell County. His omissions of events certainly reveal just as much as his commissions of errors.

Despite Keever's discussion of the twentieth century, he fails to examine the women's rights movement and its significance. The North Carolina Equal Suffrage Association (NCESA) was founded by a group of forty-five men and women who convened in Buncombe County, North Carolina in 1894.⁶¹ NCESA joined the National American Women Suffrage Association in 1913 and worked to find sponsors to support an Equal Suffrage Bill. In 1915, the Second Annual Convention of the Equal Suffrage Association of North Carolina was held at Battery Park Hotel, less than 100 miles from Iredell County in Asheville, North Carolina.⁶²



Image 20. *Votes for Women.* Photo courtesy of Pandagon

While it is unclear whether any of Iredell County's men or women held prominent positions within suffrage organizations, or developed any clubs of their own in the county, given the proximity to the Second Annual Convention and the connection with Buncombe

⁶¹ "North Carolina Equal Suffrage Association," North Carolina History Project, John Locke Foundation, <http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/commentary/207/entry>, accessed March 2, 2010.

⁶² Jill Molloy, "Timeline of Women's Suffrage," North Carolina Digital History, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-newcentury/4987>, accessed March 2, 2010.

County, Iredell residents were probably involved in the campaign some capacity.⁶³

According to U.S. census records, women have comprised 50 percent or more of Iredell County's population. The 1920 census shows 37,956 people living in Iredell County, which means nearly 19,000 of those residents were female.⁶⁴ Regardless of whether residents were actively opposed to or supportive of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, it is imperative for Keever to include such a discussion within the chapter dedicated to the twentieth century as it is a subject of great importance to the United States. Many North Carolina historians may find it embarrassing to discuss women's suffrage in the context of North Carolina given that the state did not pass a resolution confirming the Nineteenth Amendment until 1971.⁶⁵ Yet this omission is a disservice to the men and women who fought for a woman's right to vote.

Many records, like journals, of women during the nineteenth century either never were or are no longer available, which makes determining specifics of Iredell County's involvement in the suffrage movement conjecture at best. Still, Keever certainly could have provided a brief discussion in his book about the suffrage movement in North Carolina to offer a general view of what would have been happening in the county. But Keever was a booster. The topics he chose to write about, like the development of roads, industry, and standards of living are things that residents and readers can celebrate. Women wanting the vote was divisive, not only within the state and nation, but within families as well. Rather

⁶³ Governor of North Carolina, Zeublon Vance, hailed from Buncombe County and resided for some time in Iredell County during the Civil War, where he was arrested by Union forces. He gave Iredell County the Vance House and the Historic Vance Hotel.

⁶⁴ Richard L. Forstall, *North Carolina Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900-1990*, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, <http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/nc190090.txt>, accessed March 29, 2010.

⁶⁵ This was merely a symbolic gesture since Tennessee voted affirmative, sealing a ratification victory for suffragists on August 26, 1920.

than focus on such a controversial issue, Keever chose instead to focus on matters that would unite residents.

Keever's omission of such an important subject in women's history may speak to his religious education as well as his lack of knowledge or interest of the subject. The Methodist Church during the nineteenth century did not judge women highly. For example, when Frances E. Willard and four other women from the Women's Christian Temperance Union were elected as delegates to the 1888 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, they were denied seats.⁶⁶ Women were not granted full lay rights within the church, at least in the North, until 1900.⁶⁷ It took the South decades to catch up. Methodists did not begin granting women lay rights, which would enable them participate in leadership positions, until 1922.⁶⁸ And not until well into the twentieth century were women, northern or southern, allowed to be ordained.

⁶⁶ McEllhenney, "The Tide of Idealism: 1866-1918: Suffrage, Suffragettes, and Sin," <http://depts.drew.edu/lib/books/200Years/part3/054.htm>, accessed March 15, 2010, 2.

⁶⁷ Laity refers to the people of a religious faith who are distinguished from the clergy. Lay rights are those rights and duties extended to the laity. The lay leader is responsible for communications with the laity of the church and to serve as a liaison between the clergy and the members of the congregation. See the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church website under "Resources" for more details. www.wnccumc.org.

⁶⁸ Ibid.



Image 21. *Illustration from 1923 biology textbook deemed unfit for use in North Carolina schools by Governor Cameron Morrison.*⁶⁹

Another controversial subject in the twentieth century which Kever failed to tackle, despite his ample discussion of the history of Iredell County's schools, was the evolution debate of the 1920s. Brought to national attention by the Scopes "Monkey Trial" in Tennessee (*Tennessee v. Scopes*), the evolution debate sparked the question over who would dominate American culture and education: modernists or traditionalists?⁷⁰ Tennessee had an antievolution statute and Dayton high school biology teacher, John Scopes, was charged with violating the law. Nationally, politician William Jennings Bryan became the voice of the antievolution protest. Hoke County, North Carolina legislator, newspaper editor, and Presbyterian layman, D. Scott Poole, was Bryan's North Carolina counterpart.⁷¹ Both men argued for the ban of teaching evolution in the public school system. In 1927, Poole introduced a second bill, after his failed 1925 endeavor, during the North Carolina legislative

⁶⁹ The Evolution Controversy in North Carolina in the 1920s, "North Carolina Debates Evolution: An Introduction," UNC University Library, <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/evolution/introduction.html>, accessed March 2, 2010.

⁷⁰ Douglas O. Linder, "State v. John Scopes ("The Monkey Trial")," *An Introduction to the John Scopes (Monkey) Trial*, <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/evolut.htm>, accessed March 17, 2010.

⁷¹ Powell, 465.

session entitled “An Act to Prohibit the Teaching of Evolution in Certain Schools and Colleges in the State of North Carolina.”⁷² The bill was ultimately defeated.

A contributing factor to Iredell County residents’ desire to ban the teaching of evolution is that North Carolina has been politically conservative for centuries. Iredell County boasts many churches, predominantly Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian, and the evolution debate has often pitted educators against religious leaders. The Iredell County school system was also embroiled in a battle over consolidation in the early 1900s because there were far more schools than funds to properly operate them.⁷³ By combining two or more schools into one larger school, the county could save money and provide adequate resources. However, this put a strain on educators and merged a diverse group of children into one location. These two factors contributed to Iredell County residents’ stance on evolution in their public school system as education was on the rise in Iredell County. While the Poole Bill was ultimately defeated in the legislature, the North Carolina Bible League, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, compiled a petition in support of the antievolution bill with over 10,000 signatures on it.⁷⁴ The defeat of the bill had more to do with legislators’ fears of a law prohibiting particular subject matters in public education and offering support to particular religious beliefs. Another reason was the dread of being derided by other states for such fundamentalism rather than a consensus of North Carolina residents who were predominately old-fashioned and rural.⁷⁵

⁷² North Carolina General Assembly, "A Bill to be Entitled an Act to Prohibit the Teaching of Evolution in Certain Schools and Colleges in the State of North Carolina," 1927. North Carolina State Archives, <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/evolution/poolebill1927.html>, accessed March 17, 2010.

⁷³ Keever, 492.

⁷⁴ “Timeline,” The Evolution Controversy in North Carolina in the 1920s, <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/evolution/timeline.html>, accessed March 17, 2010.

⁷⁵ Powell, 466.

Why Keever ignores such an important topic in his discussion about schools and education is unclear. He had not yet begun teaching in public schools, but was in the throes of his education at Trinity College and Duke University when the Scopes controversy broke. As a Methodist, it is certain Keever was exposed to the opinions of the United Methodist Church. Such sentiments as “Charles Darwin poked his scientific nose into human origins and claimed he smelled a monkey” were rampant among congregations.⁷⁶ A few Methodists, like Vanderbilt University geology professor Alexander Winchell, attempted to suggest that Darwin’s theory of evolution supported the existence of God because it offered evidence of design in creation. But according to Methodist historian John G. McEllhenney, “Another sort of design became evident in 1878 when Winchell discovered his teaching position had been abolished.”⁷⁷ Local newspapers covered the Scopes story regularly, but the articles were reprints from newspapers in Dayton, Tennessee; Atlanta, Georgia; and New York City, offering no glimpse into the opinions of local residents.

The evolution debate took a back seat in 1929 when the stock market crashed, and the country plummeted into the Great Depression. Again, Keever more or less ignores an immensely significant event in the nation’s history, which affected Iredell County, except to say that banks in Troutman and Harmony did not survive the Depression. He discusses manufacturing, farming, and community prior to World War I and following World War II, with a brief mention of the two world wars and their veterans. North Carolina’s farmers were devastated during the tumultuous downfall of the American economy in the Great Depression. As a county comprised heavily of farmers, Iredell County was distressed to a

⁷⁶ McEllhenney, “The Tide of Idealism: 1866-1918: The Social Gospel,” <http://depts.drew.edu/lib/books/200Years/part3/057.htm>, accessed March 15, 2010, 1.

⁷⁷ McEllhenney, “The Tide of Idealism: 1866-1918: The Social Gospel,” <http://depts.drew.edu/lib/books/200Years/part3/057.htm>, accessed March 15, 2010, 1.

great degree. While farmers may have been able to produce food for themselves, they often still needed to sell their crops in order to pay for amenities like electricity, clothing, and gas for their farm equipment. According to historians Lefler and Newsome, cash farm income in North Carolina plunged from \$283 million to \$97million (roughly 35 percent), manufacturing value declined by 63 percent, retail trade shrank 76 percent, and incomes for individuals dove nearly 60 percent in fewer than five years.⁷⁸ Hundreds of banks closed, which cost many families their homes and properties, property values declined, and thousands of people were unable to pay their taxes in North Carolina. Many of these bank closings affected Iredell County specifically as evidenced by deed abstracts from the early 1930s, which show the selling of properties.

William Powell argues that the first segment of the government in North Carolina to feel the demoralizing effects of the Depression were the state's county governments, as public revenue was often deposited into local banks.⁷⁹ In 1931, the General Assembly refined the 1927 County Government Advisory Commission, creating the Local Government Commission, which was charged with keeping a close eye on local governments' issuance of bonds and notes as well as auditing these local agencies' accounts. But this devastation and dishonesty was not only felt in the cities and towns. Local farmers and their families suffered as their once honest and friendly neighbors robbed from the farms in order to feed their starving families. Corn and beans were picked clean, clothes were stolen off of clothes lines, and milk delivered by local farmers to nearby residents' homes was lifted directly off of front porches.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Lefler and Newsome, 606.

⁷⁹ Powell, 482.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 486.

To combat this devastation, North Carolina Governor Oliver Max Gardner introduced the “Live at Home” program which encouraged farmers to plant crops like hay and corn to feed themselves and their livestock, set up drying and preservation efforts to provide subsistence during the winter months, and he urged families to plant gardens in their backyards.⁸¹ Gardner also appointed a Council on Unemployment and Relief in 1930, organizing committees in 82 counties, which attempted to create work-relief jobs. But these local efforts were not enough on their own. Congress was also busy working to provide states with relief and created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to allocate funds to the nation. With the help of this new resource, the governor discontinued his Council on Unemployment and Relief and created the Governor’s Office of Relief. North Carolina received over \$1.3 million in RFC grants which was distributed to the counties for “public works of permanent value.”⁸² These RFC grants enabled Iredell County to develop a series of parks and downtown remodeling efforts.

Fortunately, the United States, including North Carolina, found hope of coming out of the Depression in Democratic presidential nominee Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt was elected by an overwhelming majority since he promised the nation a “New Deal” which would provide a program of relief, recovery, and reform. His esteem in North Carolina is evident as he received over 70 percent of the popular vote.⁸³ According to Keever’s daughters, he was just as smitten with Roosevelt’s campaign as the rest of the country, revealing the desperation everyone felt, regardless of political alignment.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Powell, 488.

⁸² Powell, 490.

⁸³ Republican nominee Herbert Hoover took only Avery and Yadkin counties. See map in Appendix B.

⁸⁴ Mrs. Mary Keever Pretlow, interview by author via phone, February 22, 2010. Mrs. Nancy Anderson, interview by author via phone, February 25, 2010.

The New Deal launched a number of programs including the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The CCC had over 61 camps in North Carolina and provided jobs to single men between the ages of 17 and 25. They performed such tasks as “planting trees, controlling erosion, constructing field terraces, reclaiming eroded land, eradicating pests, laying out trails in public forests, and engaging in fire prevention activities.”⁸⁵ As part of the WPA, many men and women worked together on the Federal Writers’ Project to compile more than 2,300 firsthand accounts from slaves and their children as well as 500 black-and-white images into a book *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936-1938*, each volume divided by state.⁸⁶ Several of these narratives come from former slaves of Iredell County and the immediate surrounding area.⁸⁷

By disregarding the devastation of the Great Depression, Keever again portrays Iredell County in a positive light. It makes the county appear as though its farms and industries were not affected by such tragedy, giving the illusion that Iredell County’s residents were still busy successfully producing furniture, textiles, and grain. Keever placed such emphasis on twentieth century trade, manufacturing, and rise of commercialism, so it makes little sense why Keever would dismiss the Great Depression. He was certainly personally affected by it, having graduated from college in the mid-1930s and struggled with unemployment. Yet if he examined the negativity which surrounded people at that time, acknowledging the depths of depravity people would sink to, like stealing from their neighbors, Keever would have to admit that Iredell County was not always able to save itself.

⁸⁵ Powell, 490-491.

⁸⁶ American Memory, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936-1938*, The Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>, accessed March 21, 2010.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Keever continues his disregard for historical subjects that negatively affect the way Iredell County is perceived by dismissing the entire Civil Rights Movement, which would have had direct effects on the county. He also utilizes little more than a page to examine desegregation in public schools.⁸⁸ In the landmark 1954 United States Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the concept of “separate but equal” educational facilities was abolished. Professor of Human Communication Studies at the University of Denver, Kate Willink, examines the effects of desegregation in rural North Carolina through the case study of Camden County in her book *Bringing Desegregation Home*.⁸⁹ Although Camden is located in the eastern part of North Carolina, its rural nature suggests that it would have shared similar reactions to desegregation as those of Iredell County inhabitants.⁹⁰ Many southern counties have been labeled as “black belt” counties. Willink argues that this region is “mistakenly characterized as having been ‘bypassed by the Civil Rights Movement.’” Rather, she asserts, the Civil Rights Movement in these areas is understudied and underappreciated, and Iredell County is no exception.

⁸⁸ See the example of the Greensboro Sit-ins. <http://sitins.com/>

⁸⁹ Kate Willink, *Bringing Desegregation Home* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 4. Also see map in Appendix A.

⁹⁰ Although eastern North Carolina counties tend to have a higher percentage of African American populations according to census records, in this particular case Iredell and Camden counties have relatively the same percentage of white-to-black percentages.

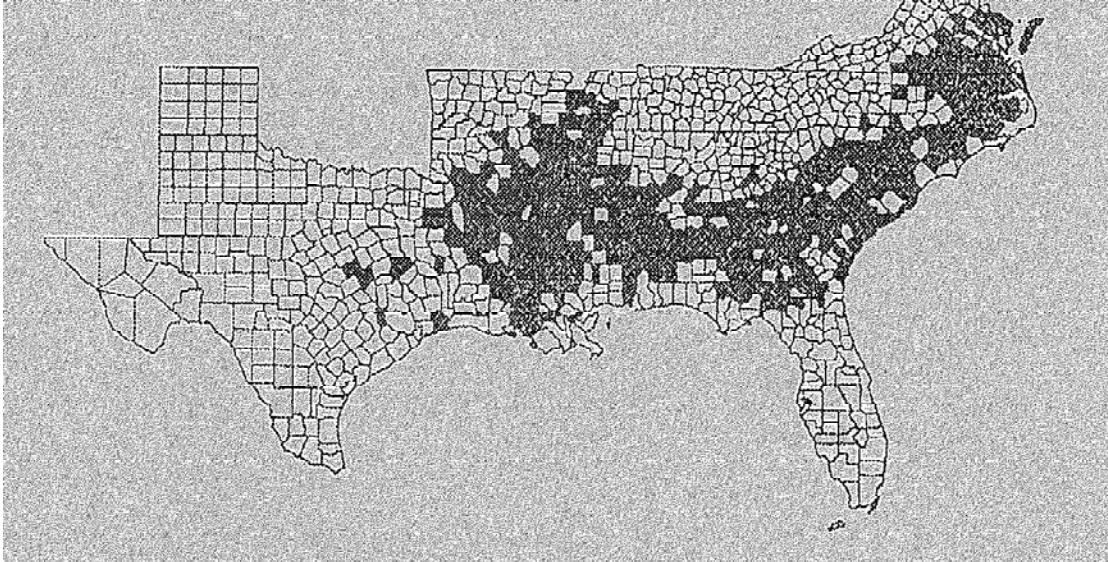


Image 22. The “Black Belt”⁹¹

Iredell County, as evidenced by Image 21, falls just north of the “Black Belt.” But race relations in these areas were still tense at best. Willink argues that “the battles in a tradition-bound, rural community over small changes, such as whether or not a newly integrated school would keep a rebel mascot from the white school, were emotion-filled and vital symbolic statements of race relations.”⁹² Even such seemingly trivial subjects as school mascots became controversial. After the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, *Brown II* was brought forth by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People demanding immediate and complete desegregation due to the nation’s slow reaction to the previous Supreme Court decision. Their request was denied in favor of a more gradual approach. In response, Camden County, and North Carolina generally, “went with the

⁹¹ Image from the cover of “Focus on Black Belt Counties: Life Conditions and Opportunities,” *Proceedings of a Preconference of the 50th Annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference*, Tuskegee University, December 5-6, 1992.

⁹² Willink, 4.

national reactionary tide that did whatever tactically possible to evade the de facto implementation of school desegregation.”⁹³

In August 1954, Gov. William B. Umstead created the North Carolina Governor’s Special Advisory Committee on Education in response to the *Brown v. Board* decision. The following year, the North Carolina General Assembly and Governor Luther H. Hodges released a statement supporting the committee’s recommendation that:

the mixing of races forthwith in the public schools throughout the state cannot be accomplished and should not be attempted. The schools of our state are so intimately related to the customs and feelings of the people of each community that their effective operation is impossible except in conformity with community attitudes. The committee feels that a compulsory mixing of the races in our schools on a statewide basis and without regard to local conditions and assignment factors other than race would alienate public support of the schools to such an extent that they could not be operated successfully.⁹⁴

Due to this stance, argues Willink, North Carolina’s integration rate was slower than such states as Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas.⁹⁵ In April 1956, the Education Committee, chaired by North Carolina House Speaker Thomas J. Pearsall, delivered the “Pearsall Plan.” The plan amended the Compulsory School Attendance Law so that students might be excused from attending an integrated public school and “recommended that the state consider special applications requesting the state to pay private school tuition grants to parents whose children were assigned to the integrated public schools.”⁹⁶ The Pearsall Plan, which circumvented *Brown*, passed the legislation with only two dissenting votes. When put before the public, the plan passed five to one, despite nominal outcries from African American leaders and some whites who argued the plan threatened the strength of public schools by

⁹³ Willink, 33.

⁹⁴ Capus Waynick, John Brooks and L.C. Pitts, *North Carolina and the Negro*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Mayors’ Cooperating Committee, 1964), 229.

⁹⁵ Willink, 34.

⁹⁶ Powell, 521.

relinquishing power to the school board.⁹⁷ The Pearsall Plan was finally declared unconstitutional for violating *Brown* in 1966 after the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. However, the plan continued to be practiced until the 1969 *Godwin v. Johnston County Board of Education* case that again declared the plan to be unconstitutional.⁹⁸

In 1970, a case was brought before the United States Court of Appeals regarding desegregation and the proposed closing of the all-black Unity Elementary that same year. In *Chambers v. Iredell County Board of Education*, Chambers et al. brought forth an appeal regarding the court's previous decision which stated that Iredell had established a unitary, desegregated school system.⁹⁹ They argued that the decision to close Unity had been racially motivated in order to prevent desegregation and was in violation of *Brown v. Board*. The Appeals Court upheld the decision, arguing that the closing of Unity School was not racially motivated and that "we decline to order the integration of Unity School now, refuse to enjoin the construction of East Elementary School, and find no basis for issuance of an injunction against discriminatory hiring and administrative practices."¹⁰⁰ Considering segregation was determined illegal in the United States in 1954, and that by 1970 Iredell County still had a segment of the black population which had yet to be desegregated, it appears that many residents, the schools, and the court itself were having trouble coping with the Supreme Court's decision.

Keever's coverage on desegregation in Iredell County is shallow at best. "On the whole," he writes, "integration has gone more smoothly than expected since it went into

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ 301 F. Supp. 1339 *Godwin v. Johnston County Board of Education*, <http://www.nctreasurer.com/2009Lawbook/nccartix/nccartix-4.htm>, accessed April 11, 2010.

⁹⁹ 423 F2d 613 *Chambers v. Iredell County Board of Education*, <http://openjurist.org/423/f2d/613/chambers-v-iredell-county-board-of-education#fn1--1>, accessed March 25, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

effect.”¹⁰¹ This court decision directly contradicts Kever’s assertion that desegregation had gone “smoothly.” Unhappy with the desegregation rulings, many white parents organized a private school, Brookwood, which would not be required to desegregate. And demonstrations at both South Iredell and Statesville Senior High Schools forced the schools to shut down for short periods of time. Kever trivializes the effects of desegregation, especially on African Americans, by asserting that they demanded “a fair share of cheerleaders and other honors.”¹⁰² Certainly the plaintiffs of *Brown v. Board of Education* and African Americans did not fight desegregation simply because they wanted more cheerleaders. African Americans wanted equal access to proper educational facilities, materials, and well-trained educators, regardless of race, as well as the ability to merge previous symbolic figures like a school mascot, rather than being expected to forfeit their identity.¹⁰³

By ignoring the racial tensions occurring through the country and North Carolina, Kever again portrays Iredell County as one which simply did not have to deal extensively with racism. Since, as he asserts, desegregation was a smooth transition, it makes the county’s residents appear superior to their counterparts in the United States who were obviously struggling with busing, sit-ins, and racially motivated violence.

Upon thorough examination of Homer Kever’s writing, it becomes clear that he fails to follow the evolution of historiography from traditionalism to revisionism. Instead he maintains deeply rooted ideas about Indian relations, slavery, and the Civil War and omits significant events which certainly impacted Iredell County, such as women’s suffrage, the debate about teaching evolution in public schools, the Great Depression, and desegregation in

¹⁰¹ Kever, 500.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Willink highlights these desires through the compilation of oral histories gathered from those who experienced desegregation first-hand. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has also catalogued experiences in “Documenting the American South: Oral Histories of the American South-Desegregation.” Can be found here: <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/browse/topics.html?cat=566>

public schools. While Keever is a contemporary of Revisionists like Stampp, he reverts back to his Methodist and rural upbringing, relying heavily on antiquated ideologies which had been promoted by traditionalists like William Archibald Dunning. By elaborating on certain subjects and minimizing or ignoring others, Keever succeeds in portraying Iredell County as one which overcame racism and poverty, where women knew their place, and everyone got along. The following chapter examines Keever's influence over other local historians and researchers, Iredell County's museum, and school-aged children. The chapter also offers a discussion of how Iredell County's local history fits within the scope of a larger public history dilemma.

CHAPTER FOUR

Towards a New History

We are fortunate that our Southern traditions embrace the past and create continuity from generation to generation. We know that we are the caretakers of the legacy of our forebears.

-Mrs. Sandra Douglas Campbell

Homer Keever's influence on Iredell County's historical memory has been felt for generations. His book, *Iredell-Piedmont County*, published in 1976, served as the first comprehensive history of the county. Subsequent local historians have followed in Keever's footsteps; the Iredell County Genealogical Society, W.N. Watt, and Sandra Douglas Campbell all published their own versions of Iredell County's history. However, it is quite clear that each of the authors relies heavily on the research and analysis Keever had already done. Keever's presence is also felt in the content of Iredell Museums Inc.'s exhibits and living history reconstructions. Sandra Douglas Campbell, as museum secretary, transmits the influence Keever had on her. And since Keever's book has long been the standard research tool, his influence has reached thousands of school-age children doing class projects or papers as well as genealogical or local researchers. Despite Keever's use of technically accurate facts and figures, his idealized myth about Iredell County has remains prevalent. Homer Keever's wide sphere of influence may be found in county newspapers, the Genealogical Society, and other local historians. As such, historians must correct this

romanticized portrayal of Iredell County by improving the research tools available to local residents.

Through his weekly local history columns in the county's newspapers, which were published for over twenty years, Keever reached a wide audience in Iredell County. It was these articles, numbering more than 500, which prompted the Iredell County Bicentennial Commission to ask Keever to compile the articles into a consolidated county history book. His book, in turn, influenced a number of local historians and historical-minded organizations who succeeded him.

One such group was the Iredell County Genealogical Society. Their 1980 book, *The Heritage of Iredell County*, follows a very similar format to Keever's. Part I highlights the natural history of the county as well as the history of churches and schools. Many of the passages directly quote Keever, while others strongly resemble his writing; Keever is listed first in their "Bibliography of Books about Iredell County."¹ Keever is specifically referenced for fifteen out of 236 articles.² These articles deal with topics such as church, school, and community organization histories. The Genealogical Society provides only the most basic details about these subjects, with no historical analysis, let alone controversial incidents like the women's rights movement or desegregation. The Society's account is a glorified and simplified description of the county's evolution from frontier land to twentieth century industrial haven.

¹ Iredell County Genealogical Society, *The Heritage of Iredell County*, 1980 (Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Hunter Publishing Company, 1980), v.

² 11, 25, 27, 43, 71, 81, 84, 96, 128, 133, 135, 140, 160, 174, and 181.

W.N. Watt, a friend and contributor to both Keever and the Genealogical Society's books, was also highly influenced by Homer Keever. Watt grew up in Statesville in the early 1900s, traveling and moving out of state several times after 1935. He periodically returned from Georgia to his hometown to conduct research throughout the 1960s to the 1990s, and published his book, *Statesville—My Home Town, 1789-1920*, in 1996. Watt's love of and devotion to Statesville is no secret, as he admits "never mince[ing] words to say something good about my hometown." Watt does, however, assert that, as an historian he "states the facts and truth" regardless of the uncomplimentary nature of certain events.³ Watt refers to slavery and the Civil War in particular, yet his book offers no discussion of slavery and his Civil War account is heavily influenced by the "Lost Cause" mythology.

Watt also consistently references Keever's research, mentioning Keever specifically nine times in his book.⁴ Yet rather than tackle the difficult history of slavery in Statesville, except to include numbers of slaves from the Statesville census each year, Watt ignores the institution until his discussion of the Civil War. Watt's views about the Civil War, though, align directly with the same southern apologist attitude that Keever learned from the Dunning School. Watt argues that because Statesville and Iredell County voted not to have a secession convention, they were "very much pro-Union and believed secession was wrong."⁵ Again, Iredell County's vote against having a secession convention is not indicative of motive regarding feelings about slavery and reasons for seceding. With such assertions from Watt, it is easy to see how he, too, manipulates certain data sets in much the same way Keever did.

³ W.N. Watt, *Statesville—My Home Town, 1789-1920* (W.N. Watt, 1996), viii.

⁴ Ibid, 2, 4, 28, 33, 42, 52, 102-103 and 340.

⁵ Ibid, 56.

Watt consistently refers to the Civil War as “Lincoln’s War” and his assertions about the prompt response of the Iredell Blues military regiment from Iredell County to the call for help at Fort Sumter are strikingly similar to those made by Keever. Watt also holds the same subtly racist views of African Americans and idealizes the paternalistic care of slave masters in the post-bellum period:

The slaves were freed, but the question was what to do about them? How could they adjust to the new demands of securing enough food and shelter to meet their daily needs without having someone tell them what to do and when to do it?⁶

According to Watt, the slaves were passively granted freedom rather than actively winning it. Also, since these former slaves were unable to care for themselves, and the North had only used propaganda to get the slaves to fight against the South, it was up to the former slave owners to provide jobs and a place to live for these displaced souls. He argues that the end of slavery allowed for the establishment of the sharecropping system to provide former slaves with a way to share in crops in return for labor. Historian William Powell, on the other hand, states that the emancipation of slaves merely increased existing tenant farming and sharecropping, and continued the exploitation of African Americans in an inherently racist system.⁷

Watt, like Keever, also disregards the importance of the women’s suffrage movement, a key topic considering that his historical review of Iredell County ends in 1920. Overall, Watt’s book mimics Keever’s, both in structure and in content; Watt divides each chapter into such sections as churches, schools, and entertainment, rather than analyzing the effects of important historical events on the area.

⁶ Watt, 61.

⁷ Powell, 416.

Following the example of her predecessors, Sandra Douglas Campbell also documents Iredell County's history in her short book, *Iredell County, North Carolina: A Brief History* (2008). She divides her study in much the same way as Keever: 1700-1776 (or frontier era), 1776-1858 (or back-country era), 1858-1900 (or trading era), and Twentieth Century (or manufacturing and livestock era), and adds a final chapter that provides the reader a glimpse into Iredell County during the twenty-first century. Campbell's commentary on the relationship between Native Americans and white settlers is similar to Keever's when she discusses the Cherokees, describing them as a band with "an unfortunate vengeful streak."⁸ She, much like Keever, attempts to minimize the atrocities of the whites. But rather than emphasizing the native's savagery in an attempt to vilify them, Campbell asserts that relations were congenial. She argues that the Catawbas "taught the pioneers woodcraft and agriculture, introducing [them to] corn, potatoes and tobacco," while the Cherokees can "be credited with teaching the settlers the tactics of guerilla warfare, enabling the colonists to later defeat the premier empire of the time, the British Empire."⁹ By wording her argument in this way, Campbell gives the impression that the Cherokees sat down and literally taught the settlers the art of Cherokee warfare. Her rhetoric ignores the fact that people witnessed these techniques first-hand as the Cherokee retaliated against them for encroaching on native land. Campbell also trivializes the treatment of Native Americans:

The Cherokees were driven to a far corner of North Carolina by the end of 1836, when they finally surrendered the last tribal land to the government with the Treaty of New Echota. Much too soon, they were once again forced to resettle in Oklahoma on reservations, although many hid in the mountains of North Carolina, refusing to leave their ancestral homeland.¹⁰

⁸ Campbell, 16.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 17.

In doing so, Campbell serves as an academic tissue, wiping away the tears so many Natives shed on the infamous Trail of Tears of the late 1830s.¹¹ Such treatment of Native Americans was nationally accepted as part of President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Policy. Campbell makes no specific mention of the Trail of Tears, a problem in itself, and her discussion about Native Americans ends with the above excerpt. She moves on, instead, to elaborate on the collection of Native American artifacts, including Cherokee and Catawba, maintained within Iredell Museums, Inc.'s permanent collection: jewelry, clay pots, and arrowheads. In doing so, Campbell reveals her own promotionalist tendencies, emphasizing the wonders of the museum collection rather than the atrocities promulgated at the hands of Iredell County settlers.

Campbell's analysis of slavery simply reiterates what Keever wrote: "one-third of the population held only a few slaves and another third held none."¹² She, like Keever, offers no in-depth examination as to why this was, citing "the more numerous middle class, dominated by yeoman farmers" as an explanation.¹³ Instead of discussing slave life in Iredell County, Campbell focuses on the white population. These yeoman farmers settled on small land holdings, living in basic log homes, providing only for themselves and their family. Campbell is adamant, however, that this housing structure did not indicate poverty or lower status.¹⁴ Campbell's discussion of the slavery is limited to an architectural analysis of the plantations that remain within Iredell County, like Farmville Plantation (now known as Darshana) and Byers' Springdale Plantation. Rather than analyze the treatment or presence of

¹¹ The phrase "academic Kleenex" has been adopted for use from a conversation with history scholars Mr. James Brickey Nuchols and Mr. Daniel Adam Michalak.

¹² Campbell, 45.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, 46.

slaves, Campbell's motive for mentioning the plantations has more to do with their architectural significance, since both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Campbell relies on Keever, again, when discussing the Civil War, calling it "The War Between the States."¹⁵ She does not mention slavery as a cause, asserting instead that the war was a result of states' rights issues. Campbell also argues that Lincoln's election "resulted in the immediate secession of seven states, with four more to secede after Lincoln's call for government troops to fight the 'rebellion' at Fort Sumter."¹⁶ According to Campbell, were it not for Lincoln's call to suppress the rebellion, Iredell County, and the state of North Carolina, would never have joined the Confederacy.¹⁷ Like Keever, Campbell utilizes the "Lost Cause" mythology regarding her analysis of the war. Portraying the war as a defense of states' rights, with Confederate soldiers remaining loyal to the values of the Constitution, helps southerners (and local historians) maintain some semblance of pride in their region as opposed to shame and defeat.

Like Keever, Sandra Campbell provides a brief overview of the twentieth century. She marks the 1900s as an era

plagued with tumultuous emotions and ill-considered class and color conflict, as well as awkward attempts to change the "Southern System." Reconstruction remained slow and painful, and was rife with contradiction. Even so, this milieu of old beliefs and progressive ideas—new inventions and the comfort of the familiar—resulted in a progressive period in government and education in the 1900s, with inherited social, economic and political structures left in question.

While Campbell mentions the progressive period in Iredell County, she fails to mention several key moments in American history—women's suffrage, the evolution debate in

¹⁵ Ibid, 57.

¹⁶ Campbell, 57.

¹⁷ Ibid, 58.

schools, and desegregation, with only a brief mention of the devastating effects of the Great Depression on Iredell County residents. She, much like Keever, chooses to emphasize the positive events and histories that formed Iredell County, neglecting or trivializing those tribulations faced by county residents.

Campbell currently serves as secretary of Iredell Museums, Inc. Keever's influence on Campbell can be seen in her work with the museum, although she denies that she has specifically utilized Keever's work in creating exhibits.¹⁸ Campbell has worked at the museum since 1999, serving as President of the Board, secretary, and Exhibits/Collections chairperson, helping to structure and stage exhibits.¹⁹ Since the merger in 2004 between the Iredell Arts and Heritage Museum and the Iredell Children's Museum, Campbell has also aided the director, Theresa Golas, in understanding the history of Iredell County. Ms. Golas grew up in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania and Chicago, Illinois, moving to Iredell County in 2004 to be the interim director of the museum.²⁰ Ms. Golas found the position for director of Iredell Museums Inc. through an online job search and was unfamiliar with Iredell County, or North Carolina. Because Sandra Campbell grew up in Iredell County and has worked with the museum for so long, she was the natural choice for Ms. Golas' tutor in the history of Iredell County. Thus, in turn, Ms. Golas has also been affected by Keever. This influence has been transmitted into the exhibits these women, and the museum's board, have chosen to display. Keever's influence is particularly pronounced in the living history exhibitions, which portray Iredell County's frontier much the way Keever describes it.²¹

¹⁸ Sandra Douglas Campbell, email correspondence with author, March 29, 2010.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Theresa Golas, interview by author, Statesville, North Carolina, January 25, 2010.

²¹ Unfortunately, the museum has no records of the exhibits presented prior to the merger in 2004.

Recent exhibits at the museum have included the photography of local photographer Max Tharpe (Fall 2009), as well as a display of portions of the museum's permanent collection, based on input of community members. According to Sandra Campbell, "This exhibit features items selected by 20 community members along with stories of how the items became part of our diverse collection."²² The selections, which debut Spring 2010, reflect the residents' positive and promotional view of the county in which they live—a county full of artisans and industrial entrepreneurs. A few items include an old-fashioned telephone, wood carvings, and paintings. Prior to the late 1970s, Iredell County's museum did not exhibit the works of African Americans or present artifacts related to their existence in the county. Based on the selection of exhibit items for the current show, it does not appear that relevant materials for blacks exist within the museum's permanent collection.

The museum's exhibits affect the way Iredell County residents and visitors perceive and understand the county's history. Many schools in the Iredell-Statesville school system, primarily elementary and middle schools, visit the museum or the living history expos since the curriculum for Iredell County schools includes local and North Carolina history.²³ These school children also rely on the James Iredell Room of the Iredell County Library, as it contains materials relevant to local history. When one asks the local history librarian, Mr. Joel Reese, to guide them in researching Iredell County, he immediately selects Homer Keever and Sandra Douglas Campbell's books as primary guides. These children are young and impressionable, eager to learn about local history because it is relevant to them. Through their exposure at such a young age to the myth created by Keever and perpetuated by local

²² Court Street Gallery Calendar of Events, <http://iredellmuseums.org/calendar.htm>, accessed March 28, 2010.

²³ Curriculum Guide (3rd and 8th grades), Iredell-Statesville School System <http://iss.schoolwires.com/15311071210652677/site/default.asp?15311071210652677Nav=|&NodeID=224>, accessed March 25, 2010.

historians like Campbell and Watt, the children grow up believing this romanticized narrative. It is likely that as adults, they will educate their own children in the same fashion.

Unfortunately, for the 14.5 percent of school children who are African American, the narrative of Iredell County's history is not relevant to them.²⁴ Their history has been sanitized, with their ancestors portrayed as happy slaves who loved "Massa." African American children in Iredell County learn a history that neglects or trivializes black suffering, struggle, and triumph, and the complexities of their relationships with whites in order to promote an Iredell County that is free of such problems.

Iredell County is not the only region plagued by this perpetuation of myth. Rather, the county is merely a case study of a larger dilemma in public history. According to public historians Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, this mythologized history is the most prolific and pervasive, defined as "serving dominant interests or reinforcing popular prejudices."²⁵ These "historical messages" are embedded in local efforts and commercial forms, serving as the reason this myth has "profound impact on public consciousness" and is transmitted from generation to generation with few exceptions. Diffusion is also due to the "constant repetition and their slick and palatable presentations."²⁶

With such an increase in the number of people involved in public history, individuals like Kever have "led to a flood of new kinds of historical products, generally meant for various public audiences, rather than the usual circle of professional academic specialists."²⁷

²⁴ Dr. Bryan Setser, Chief Quality Officer Iredell-Statesville Schools, "Organizational Profile," *Quality Assurance*, <http://www.iss.k12.nc.us/quality/>, accessed April 1, 2010.

²⁵ Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), xvii.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Michael H. Frisch, "The Memory of History," *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 5.

Likewise, scholar Michael H. Frisch argues that most of the energy in public history has been directed toward what he calls “supply-side dynamics of the presumably unbalanced market for historical intelligence.”²⁸ What Frisch is asserting is that public historians have the delicate task of balancing the “supply-side,” or what the public wants, versus the market for historical intelligence, academics in opposition to lay people. In targeting the wants of the public, public historians and institutions have managed “variously to invoke, revoke, and generally shrink from provoking a serious reckoning with their past” because offering analyses of controversial issues is [presumed to be] not what the public wants.²⁹

Frisch goes on to assert that the relationship between history and memory has been “uniquely fractured in contemporary American life,” and thus is a subject which must be addressed.³⁰ Frisch’s argument may be applied to the portrayal of Iredell County by Homer Kever. There is a distinct disconnect between Kever’s memory, his personal beliefs, and the basic facts about Iredell County. This disconnect perpetuates the myth that Iredell County was somehow “better” or “more progressive” than it actually was, unaffected by racism and poverty.

Iredell County’s museum is comparable to most any modern history museum as it faces the challenges of evolving with the changing needs and desires of the public. Public historian Michael Wallace examines the kinds of perspectives museums promote and argues that

...from the mid-nineteenth century on, most history museums were constructed by members of dominant classes and embodied interpretations that supported their

²⁸ Ibid, 6.

²⁹ Frisch, 6.

³⁰ Ibid.

sponsors' privileged positions...Museum builders simply embedded in their efforts versions of history that were commonplaces of their class's culture.³¹

Such salability, according to Terence O'Donnell, leads many public historians and institutions to "misrepresent one's product, to claim for it efficacies that it does not in fact possess," whether this intention is a conscious decision or not.³²

History museums, and local historians, that hope to survive in the competitive field of history must focus their work "about the past, not [as] shrines to it."³³ Public historian Mark Howell asserts:

What the public wants out of its history may not always be what the interpreter feels is best for them. Many come seeking a reaffirmation of lost ideals; some come wistfully fantasizing for a purer, simpler time, to escape from today's burdens; a few aren't exactly sure why they came.³⁴

It is precisely for these reasons that Homer Kever's idealized version of Iredell County survives as a prominent and respected portrayal of the county's history. Public historians have the difficulty of maintaining a balance between the "sellable" history, which the public wants to see and hear, versus the more accurate interpretations, which may not be a glorious recollection of a region or people's history. These professionals (as well as dedicated amateur local historians) face the challenge of not only educating the public about a site or region's history and relevance, but also determining how this history should be interpreted and presented.³⁵

³¹ Michael Wallace, "History Museums in the United States," *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 137.

³² O'Donnell, 241.

³³ Mark Howell, "Interpreters and Museum Educators: Beyond the Blue Hairs," in *Public History: Essays from the Field*, Revised Edition, ed. James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 2006), 142.

³⁴ Ibid, 143.

³⁵ Howell, 143.

According to Howell, “our understanding of the past is as much a reflection of the generation doing the research as it is the period being studied.”³⁶ Iredell County has relied heavily on the analysis of a man who was influenced by his Methodist upbringing, the racial tensions of the 1900s, and the ideas of an antiquated school of thought. Rather than challenge these notions, subsequent historians have simply continued to promote Keever’s view of Iredell County because it is affirmative and encouraging. Keever could not have understood the impact his interpretation or lack thereof, would have on future generations. It is thus the task for current and future historians to confront Keever’s misguided analyses and place Keever’s romanticized and ultimately inaccurate history of Iredell County within the context of modern, and more complicated, historical interpretations.

There are several steps that could be taken to address Keever’s mythologized portrait of Iredell County. For example, on the local history level an effort must be made to incorporate a new understanding of Iredell County’s history into future exhibits and living history expos. The Iredell Museums, Inc. should provide marketing of and access to these events for residents and school children alike. Another way the museum could incorporate an updated history is to review their collections management policy and amend it to include the acquisition of materials specifically relevant to women’s issues, the Civil Rights Movement, and other previously ignored subjects. The Iredell County Library must also expand its collection in the James Iredell Room by incorporating the writings of historians like Kenneth Stampp. Inclusion of the expanded historiography of Iredell County and North Carolina would afford local researchers and students with a more accurate representation of these complex histories. Given the wealth of historical resources that exist, schools and local

³⁶ Ibid.

historians must stop relying on Keever's antiquated presentation and begin moving towards a new history of Iredell County.

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APPENDIX A

Maps & Charts

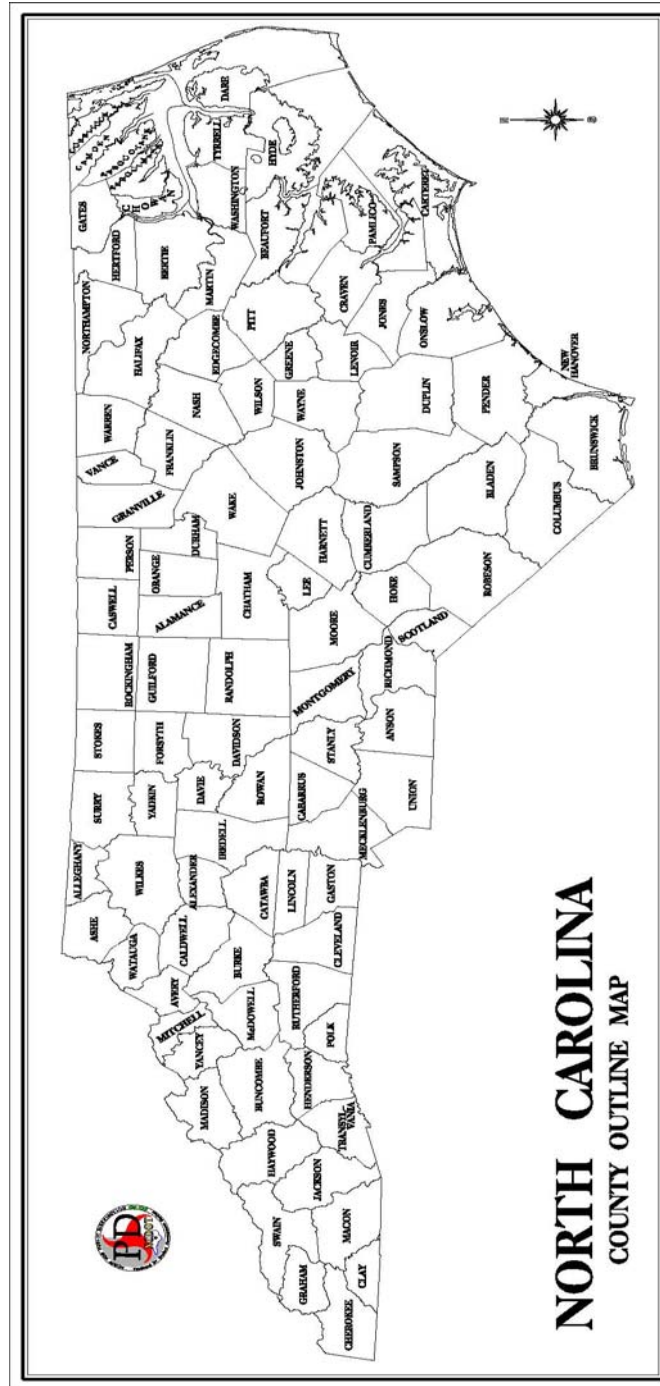


Figure 1. North Carolina county outline map.

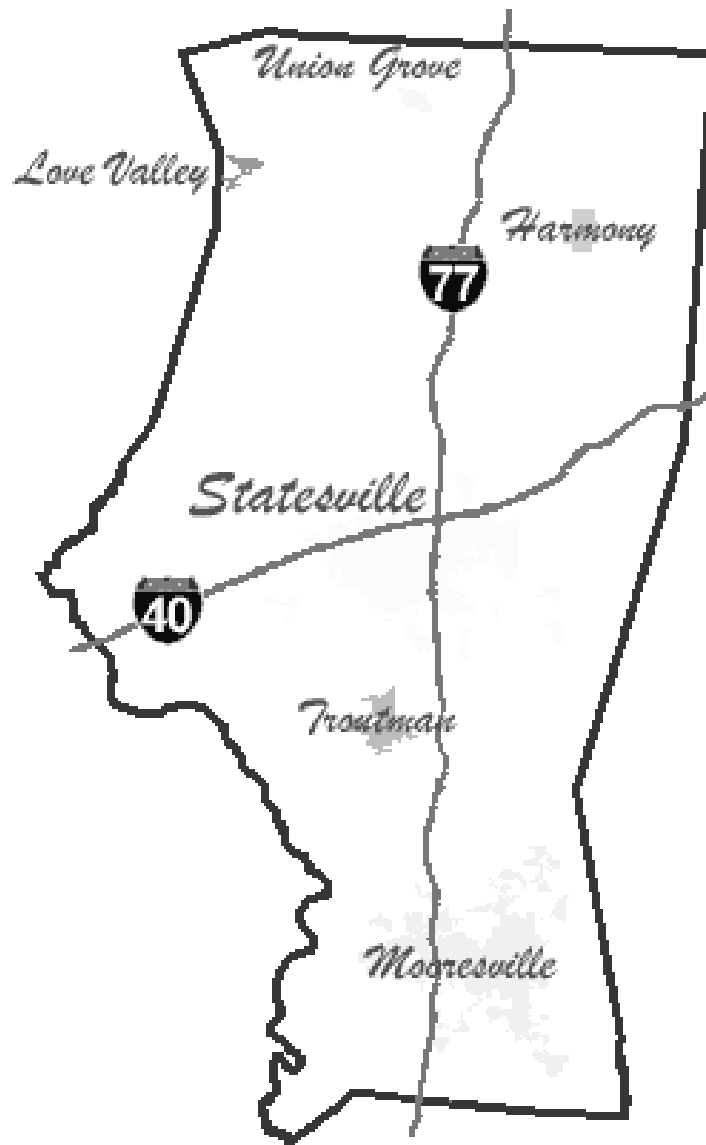


Figure 2. Outline of Iredell County.

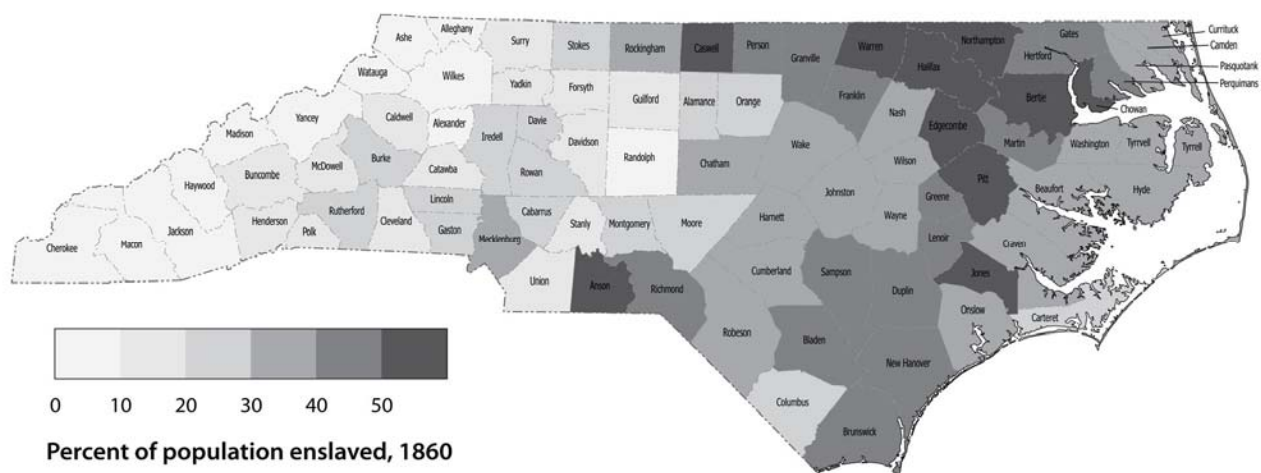


Figure 3. Map of North Carolina counties: Percentage of population enslaved, 1860.

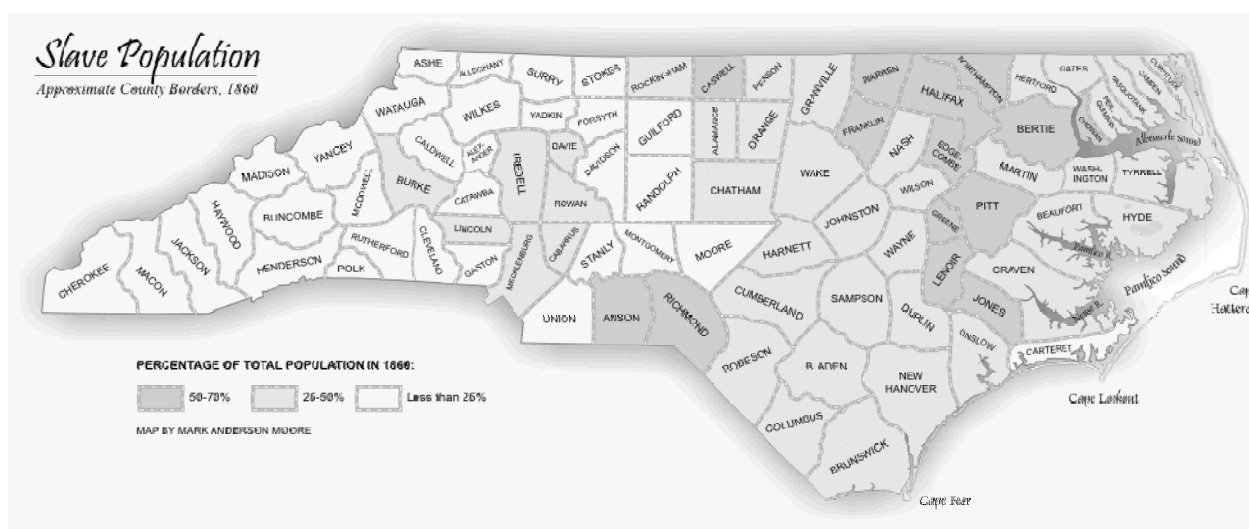


Figure 4. Map of North Carolina Counties: Percentage of slave population, 1860.

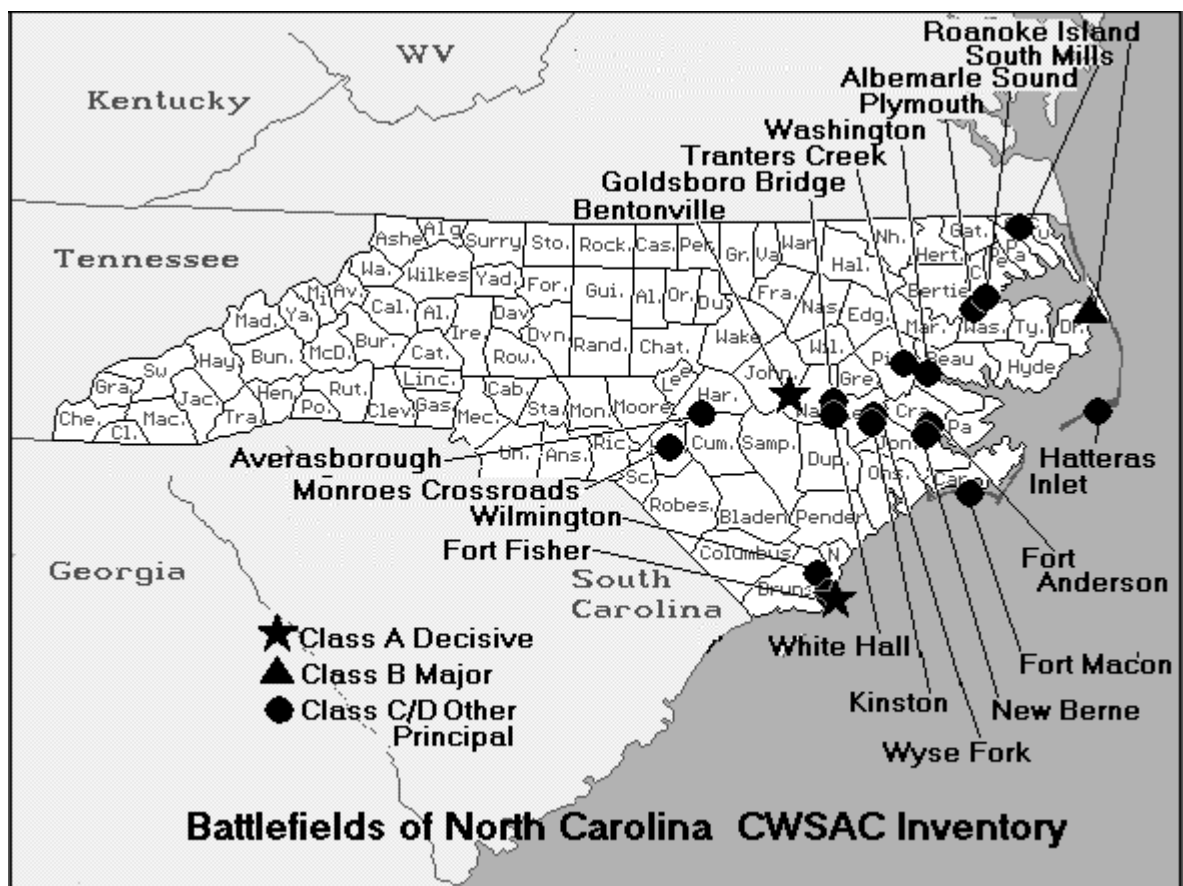


Figure 5. Battlefields of North Carolina map.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jamie LeAnne Hager was born in Portsmouth, Virginia on May 9, 1987. She grew up in a military family, attending schools in Norfolk, Virginia; Charleston, South Carolina; and Statesville and Olin, North Carolina. She graduated from North Iredell High School in May 2005. The following fall, she entered Appalachian State University to pursue a degree in archaeology and was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree with university and departmental honors in May 2008. In the fall of 2008, she accepted a teaching assistantship position in the history department at Appalachian State University and pursued her Master of Arts degree in public history. The M.A. with Distinction was awarded in May 2010.

Ms. Hager is a member of the Omicron-Phi chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and the Cratis D. Williams Honor Society which recognizes the top 1 percent of all graduate students and their academic achievements. She also founded and served as president of the Appalachian State University Graduate History Association. She will be attending The Ohio State University in the fall as a teaching associate to pursue a Ph.D. in history under the guidance of Dr. Margaret Newell. Her home address is 3340 Wilkesboro Hwy, Statesville, NC 28625. Her parents are Mr. Darren Steven Hager of Statesville, North Carolina and Mrs. Kimberly Kay Hager of Berrien Springs, Michigan.